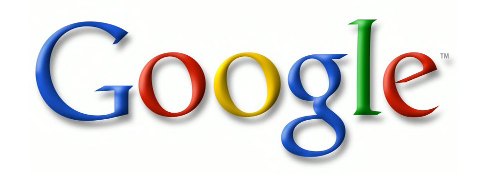



BALZAC'S COMÉDIE HUMAINE
H. H. WALKER


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THE

COMÉDIE HUMAINE

AND ITS AUTHOR

WITH TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH OF

BALZAC

By H. H. WALKER



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THE "COMÉDIE HUMAINE,"

AND ITS AUTHOR.

THE "COMÉDIE HUMAINE,"

AND ITS AUTHOR.

Some fifty years ago, a young man—a literary aspirant, who had just read to an audience of friends his first work, a tragedy, which his audience condemned with the most amicable unanimity—exclaimed, "I have made a mistake, tragedy is not my forte; but if I cannot be the first of dramatists, I will be the first of novelists." His friends laughed at the presumption or pitied the folly of the would-be author, according to their bent; but, strange to say, he kept his word, for the name of the young man was Honoré de Balzac.

It was a long while before he fulfilled his promise—a very long while before that name became a glory to himself and a pride to his friends; but in the end he triumphed, and nobody now will deny to Balzac the title of First of Novelists. His works, or rather

his work—for he declared that each of his tales, although complete in itself, formed part of one *magnum opus*, which he christened the "Comédie Humaine," and which we may translate "The Drama of Life,"—this work is unparalleled in any language. In scope and extent it is unapproached by any work of fiction; whilst for the genius, the skill, and the astonishing amount of acquired knowledge with which the design is carried out, it is still more preeminently alone. Balzac may have been surpassed by one writer in pathos, by another in wit, and by another in humour, but no one novelist ever displayed in his works the same amount of varied knowledge and practical experience.

The reason of this is simple enough. He was not only a born genius, but a severe student and a hard worker—a student in the all-teaching university of Adversity, a worker under the imperative master Necessity. This man of genius was no dreamer, but a very practical person, who, although he had implicit faith in his vocation for literature, strove nevertheless, in deference to the wishes of his friends, to support himself by trade and earn an independence, that he might be able to follow his natural bent. He failed signally in trade, and succeeded wonderfully in literature, which proved that he was not mistaken in his vocation, but judged himself

correctly. Before he became a novelist, Balzac was a daily reader at the public libraries, a solitary burner of the midnight oil, a student of law, a clerk in a lawyer's office, a printer, a publisher, and a journalist; and the proofs of his intimate acquaintance with the details of all these trades and professions are to be found in his works. Any person, with sufficient application, might have read up the natural science, the metaphysics and mysticism, the history, law, music, and medicine, and the wonderfully wide acquaintance with general and foreign—particularly English—literature scattered through his tales: but no one who had not actually served a personal apprenticeship to the legal profession could have written "Cæsar Birotteau," "Le Contrat de Mariage," and other works exhibiting a profound knowledge not only of the practice of the law, but of the practices of lawyers; nobody who had not been printer, publisher, lawyer, and journalist, could have written the "Illusions Perdues," the longest and most many-sided of his tales; and, finally, nobody with all the varied experience, but without the varied genius of Balzac, could have written the "Comédie Humaine."

For it must not be imagined, because Balzac availed himself largely of his unusually wide personal acquaintance with men and things, and his extra-

ordinary intuitive insight into nature and character, that he was at all deficient in imagination. As purely imaginative creations, the "Association des Treize" and the "Frères de la Consolation" are as widely different as can be, and the idea of the "Peau de Chagrin" is as fantastic as anything in the "Arabian Nights." The author, whose great work extends over forty volumes of over three hundred closely printed pages each, and comprises upwards of eighty separate tales, cannot be accused of any lack of the inventive faculty. He himself complained that the title of *plus fécond de nos romanciers,* applied to him in his lifetime, was an injury to his reputation, as it induced people to consider him a mere ceaseless scribbler, and under-estimate the character of his works. Probably the title of "most voluminous" is not exactly that which any author would consider the highest compliment, but it could scarcely be repudiated by the author not only of the eighty tales of the "Comédie Humaine," but of forty others, which he considered unworthy of his fame and never avowed, besides other disconnected tales, plays, and newspaper articles.

Our concern is with the author rather than the man, and with the work rather than the author; still, it may be worth while to consider briefly how the man became an author, and how the author produced

his work. The life of Balzac still remains to be written, and, if faithfully written, would be as interesting and, above all, as instructive as that of any genius who ever lived; but such an undertaking is far beyond the purpose of the present writer and the scope of the present work. If ever a man was the author of his own fortune, that man was Balzac; if ever genius triumphed over circumstances, it was the genius of the "Comédie Humaine." But at what a price! The genius survives, but the man was killed in his prime; his physical organization was as exceptionally strong as his mental, but he sacrificed the one to the other.

The child Balzac, who inherited this splendid double gift of *mens sana in corpore sano,* was far more remarkable for graces of person than of intellect. The child was handsome, loving, and lovable; the boy was dull, aggravating, and perplexing to his masters and parents. After having passed for a dullard, if not a dunce, at all his schools, he began at seventeen the study of the law, and at twenty-one had passed all his examinations. Then came the crisis of his fate. His father informed him of his intention that he should become a notary and succeed to the practice of a friend who was prepared to resign to him. Honoré was thunderstruck, for a course of legal studies did not at all necessarily indicate the

choice of the legal profession; a young man *faisait son droit,* just as, with us, he goes to college and takes his degree. The father was equally thunderstruck to hear that his son intended to be an author, and nothing but an author. In the end, it was agreed that Honoré should have two years to prove his capacity for the career he had chosen. It is this part of his life that ought to be studied and taken to heart by young gentlemen who believe they have a vocation for literature. His family were about to leave Paris, and he was left behind in a garret in the Rue Lesdiguières, which he had chosen in order to be near the library of the Arsenal, the only one in Paris he did not know. His mother furnished his garret with a bed, a table, and some chairs, and made him an allowance on which, says his sister, he could not have lived if it had not been for an old servant of the family, who was charged to watch over him. The contrast between this miserable room and his father's house, between the life he led there and at home, must have been terrible. No ordinary spirit could have endured the privations and the solitude, (for he was cut off from all intercourse with the friends of the family, who believed him absent from Paris). But Honoré did not complain; he revelled in his freedom, his studies, and his dreams.

What the material conditions of his existence

were may be judged from the requests he makes to his sister. He begs her to send him his father's Tacitus, a counterpane, and an old shawl; he had not clothes enough to keep him warm in bed or out of bed, for all the "sacred fire." As to his fare, he lived on eggs, milk, and *charcuterie,* got from the nearest and worst grocer because he would not waste time to go further and fare better. He complains that the oil for his lamp costs him more than his food.

For a year and a half he studied, and thought, and wrote, and at the end of that time was ready with the work which was to establish his claims to immortality. It was "Cromwell," the tragedy whose first and only audience condemned it so unanimously, and were quite right in their judgment, for the author afterwards admitted that it was not even an embryo of genius. After this awful fiasco the garret was impossible; peopled with illusions it might be habitable, but even Balzac could not live there alone with despair. The mother, alarmed for the health of her son, took him home; and there, in the midst of material comfort, he wrote, in the next few years, a succession of tales which, far from bringing him fame, did not bring him bread and cheese.

Again the question arose, what was he to do for a living? To please his family he tried business, first

as a publisher, then as a printer. The printing and publishing cost his family a considerable sum of money, and brought him nothing but debts, but they enriched the "Comédie Humaine" with scenes that, without them never could have been written. At eight and twenty, Balzac, whose brain was then scarcely a marketable article, had to begin life afresh, with nothing but his pen to rely on, and heavily loaded with debt. But just at this period his genius began to be recognized by the public, and, consequently, by the booksellers; he began to earn better wages, and would have been able to support himself, if it had not been for the printer's and publisher's debts. As it was, he could only live by the help of bills. Even the usurers helped to enrich the "Comédie," but how the author contrived to escape utter ruin at their hands is marvellous.

The life he led at this time was worse than that of the Rue Lesdiguières. In reply to the complaints of his family that he had abandoned them, he says, "I should be better off if one of my creditors would have me put in Sainte Pélagie; * my living would cost nothing, and I could not be more a prisoner than I am held captive at home by hard work. The postage of a letter, an omnibus, are expenses I cannot allow myself, and I do not go out for fear of wearing out

* The debtors' prison.

my clothes. Is that plain?" It seems plain indeed, and was, no doubt, literally true.

After a time, he made more money; and we are told that he wore a white cashmere dressing-gown, with a golden girdle, to which was attached a pair of solid gold scissors when he was writing, and went about in a gorgeous coat, with a walking-stick, on the knob of which were stuck all the jewels he had received as presents. Childish, certainly, and quite unworthy of genius; but, ah! think of genius stopping at home for fear of wearing out its clothes, and not being able to afford a postage stamp or a ride in an omnibus! Think what those absurd gold scissors had really cost!

He always had a conviction that he should one day be rich, and was full of dreams and schemes for suddenly acquiring wealth—not always chimerical, for one, at least, of them enriched others, although it never profited himself. From his youth he longed for three things—wealth, fame, and love. He saw his manhood slipping away without bringing him either: but he lived just long enough to taste of all three. To taste, and that was all; it can hardly be said that he lived to possess them, but he died rich, famous, and beloved. After twenty years of herculean toil, he had established his reputation, and married a rich, high-born, and beautiful woman, whom he loved. In

a few months he died. It was a fitting climax to his fate—the old story of the soldier slain in the hour of victory, the good ship wrecked in port, the alchemist killed at the moment of projection.

He died before he was fifty, of disease of the heart. But his was no case of the giant spirit fretting the pigmy body to decay; his body, as we have said, was as robust as his mind, but we can easily understand how it came to be worn out when we read how he used it. During his twenty years of purely literary work, dating from the failure of the printing business, this is how he worked. Having first thoroughly thought out the plot of a tale, he shut himself up and began to write it. Until it was finished—and this might be a fortnight, a month, or six weeks—he never went out, and saw nobody. He went to bed at six, rose again at midnight, and worked till noon, turning night into day the whole time of his incarceration; and during this time he drank enormous quantities of coffee, and lived as lightly and sparingly as possible. When he emerged into the daylight, he was pale, haggard, and hardly recognizable—no human machine could bear such a strain as that. After having tortured himself, he proceeded to torture the printers. He took them the manuscript, which was, after all, a mere sketch or skeleton of the book that was to be, and as they returned him the proofs, he filled in the outlines of

the story and developed the characters. He scrawled all over every sheet of paper, added riders innumerable, repeated this process over and over again up to ten or a dozen times, and gave the wretched printers such a time of it, that at last no man would work on Balzac for more than two hours at a stretch, and then only at double wages. The printers were wiser than the author; he worked on himself till he had worked out his body, though his brain was as vigorous as ever. This was the process by which Balzac became a great man (for in France a great author is a great man), and this was the life that brought him the knowledge of men and things displayed in the "Comédie Humaine," to which we must now return.

It is scarcely too much to say that there are few conceivable types of character that are not to be found in the "Comédie Humaine," and few phases of our inner life that do not find their reflection there. Take the eternal theme, the master passion, the key-note of humanity, and see what wonderful variations Balzac has contrived to play upon the old, old air of love! Look at the shifty steps of ambition, the nice gradations of avarice he has depicted! In all this mass of characters and personages, the majority, of course, must have been entirely "evolved out of his own internal consciousness," and evolved with a startling reality and fidelity, necessarily intuitive.

To say that an author possesses the power of perfectly realizing and individualizing his characters, is only to say that he is endowed with the genius of his art; fiction is nothing if it is not as truthful as truth, and realism is the peculiar characteristic of Balzac. He neglected nothing that could conduce to it. He never described a *locale* without having thoroughly studied it on the spot, and never attempted to disguise it, unless for good and avowed reasons; he went into details that are sometimes tedious from their elaboration, but always elaborately correct; he described the personal appearance as well as the mental attributes of his characters with photographic exactness, and he gave them real names. It is astonishing what an effect is produced by these seeming trifles. To lay the scene of a fiction in a non-existent place, and to give its actors absurd or impossible names, at once destroys all illusion and verisimilitude. Le Père Grandet is a real person, but who can believe in Jonas Chuzzlewit?

Another great feature in the realism of Balzac is that he never loses sight of money. In all his works you never once meet with those intangible, illusory lovers who always, as Michelet says, "apparently have large fortunes and nothing to do." Of course, many of his lovers are rich; but, rich or poor, they act according to their riches or their poverty. In

many of his tales money is the mainspring of the interest, the motive power of the actors, and therefore necessarily prominent; but even in the most romantic it is never forgotten. The pecuniary means of the characters are explained with minuteness and precision. He is not even content to say that such a person has an income of so much a year—he always tells us of what it is composed and from whence derived. In short, he never, for an instant, loses sight of the fact that there is no situation in life, however trivial or however critical, in which a man's sentiments, his conduct, and his fate are not influenced by money.

The intense realism of Balzac is absolutely bewildering to a foreigner; for the fictitious persons in the "Comédie Humaine" are so lifelike, and so skilfully connected with the history of the times, that after getting thoroughly well acquainted with them all, we come to believe a great deal more in the existence of the great families of Grandlieu and Chaulieu, the Counts of Serizy and Granville, Rastignac and De Marsay, Generals Montcornet and Montriveau, and the bankers Nucingen and Du Tillet, than in the real worthies of the epoch, whose names we have never heard. As for the ordinary people—the priests, lawyers, doctors, painters, authors, musicians, shopkeepers, usurers, soldiers, sailors,

tinkers, and tailors—nobody could doubt their existence, and we can readily believe that, to their author and creator, these brain-born creatures were far more real and existent personages than to the reader. His head and his heart, his mind and his soul, were full of them; and in the middle of a conversation about ordinary affairs, about important business, about his family whom he tenderly loved, he would break off and say, "Let us talk about the real world —about Eugénie Grandet and Monsieur Benassis." The "Comédie Humaine" was his world, the sphere in which he lived; the ordinary world was for ordinary people. Hoffman, the German, used to have dolls made up to represent the fantastic characters in his impossible tales; but Balzac wanted no dolls. His characters were real; high and low, rich and poor, good and bad, they were all real men and women.

For it is the women who occupy the place of honour, and the most ardent advocate of the rights of her sex would be satisfied with the influence assigned to it in the "Comédie Humaine." In every case in which a woman is not herself the heroine, she is the good or evil genius of the hero; the men are mere puppets in their hands, and the men are not fools. But marriage seems to be the turning-point in their career. If a man is to get on in the world, he must make a good marriage; that is indispensable; and

whatever may be his own abilities or occupation, in nine cases out of ten, the man's position in the world depends on his wife, or, alas! on somebody else's. But what women! Can anybody conceive a more adorable creature than Louise de Chaulieu? Was there ever a more loving wife than Madame Jules, a more devoted mother than Renée de Maucombe, a more dutiful daughter than Marguerite Claës. Is there a more perfect example of all the domestic virtues than Ève Chardon, a more sublime and saintly incarnation of charity than Madame de la Chanterie? Not that the angelic element prevails exclusively; the opposing influence is well represented. There are demons as wicked as only female demons can be, and daughters of earth, all the more dangerous for having just a spice of the devil in their composition; very charming and seductive sinners. But daughters of earth, heaven, or Hades, they are all irresistible, and the sex is always mistress of the situation in "the World according to Balzac."

The real scope and intent of the "Comédie Humaine" is explained in the *avant propos*; suffice it to say that the author designed it for a complete picture of the manners of his day, and of society as it existed, from the throne to the kennel. It must be admitted that Balzac was fortunate in his epoch, and came into the world at the right moment. Within the

memory of man, society in France had gone through changes more startling than the ordinary growth of centuries. When he attained years of observation, one generation had seen the old Monarchy, the great Revolution, the First Empire, and the Restoration, and might live to see the second and third Revolutions and the Second Empire. Born under the Emperor, Balzac himself saw the two Bourbons and the Orleans on the throne; he could learn from actual spectators, perhaps from living actors, the bloody details of the Revolution, and the infamous traditions of the old Monarchy, and each of these ruling powers had its own manners and a totally distinct state of society, which enabled him to introduce into his work a variety no other period could have afforded. Of the fidelity of the picture it is scarcely for us, foreigners and posterity, to judge; but we can judge that the artist has left behind him a work of consummate art, of the greatest interest and the highest genius. Nobody now disputes the genius of Balzac: it is only his morality that is assailed.

There can be no doubt that some of his tales, taken separately, are immoral, in the sense that they describe vicious persons and vicious actions, but it can scarcely be said that their tendency is to encourage vice; for although virtue does not find its reward on earth quite so surely in the pages of Balzac

as in the publications of the Religious Tract Society, vice is quite as certain to work out its own punishment. In this Balzac is perhaps truer to nature and to fact, and therefore a more reliable guide, than the Tract Society. But the real question is, whether an author, who sets himself the task of representing society as it is, can be convicted of immorality because he paints its vices as well as its virtues—in fact, fills in the shades as well as the lights of the picture.

The most sincere admirer of Balzac must feel tempted to wish that some of his works had never been written. The physician who makes a diagnosis of a case must not shrink from describing any of the symptoms of the disease, but there is no occasion to drag the public through the wards and dissecting-room of an hospital. It may be right to call attention to the gangrenes on the body social, but surely it would have been more decent to hide such a disgusting mass of corruption as is revealed in the "Cousine Bette" from the public eye. Balzac declared that the "Marneffes, male et femelle," were real monsters, and no creations of his; but, like some of the wretched objects that disgrace our streets, they ought not to be allowed to shock our sight and our feelings. Besides this, "Sarrazine" and the "Fille aux Yeux d'Or" surely need not have been written;

they are too unnatural and too exceptional to form a necessary part of the author's design. If the author, like the witness in the box, is to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," that is an answer to all objections; but, even in the interests of truth, a little reticence may sometimes be advisable.

We must remember, we English, that we cannot expect Balzac to look at society from our point of view, nor to accept our standard of morality. Morality is, in many respects, a question of latitude and longitude. East and West, North and South, have very opposite ideas on the subject; and although the geographical distance between London and Paris is slight, the variation of the moral meridian is wide. Balzac was most deeply and extensively read in English literature of all kinds, light and serious, prose and poetry, and he was an ardent admirer of Sir Walter Scott, who was, in some sort, his model; but he does not hesitate to accuse him of coldness, hardness, and falsity in his portraits of women. This he considers the fault, not so much of the author, as of the people for whom he wrote. Hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness are declared to be our national vices, and these are traced to the cold and ascetic spirit of Protestantism. Here we have the issue: Protestantism accuses Catholicism of sensuousness, Catholicism

imputes to us a dry asceticism; England reproaches France with licentiousness, and France retorts with hypocrisy. Which is right? Neither?—or both?

But the accusation of immorality was brought against Balzac by a certain section of his own countrymen, and the best reply to it is to be found in his own words in the *avant propos*, which it is incumbent on every one who wishes to appreciate properly the genius of the author to study carefully. Therein he proclaims himself the champion of the throne and the altar, of religion and royalty. He aspires to produce, as an historian, a faithful picture of the manners of his day, and, as a philosopher, a careful study of human nature; but he declares that, as a writer of fiction, he has felt at liberty to depict the world better than it is—the natural tendency of fiction being towards the *beau ideal*, unfettered by the restrictions of fact which bind history. Yet we can scarcely consider the "Comédie Humaine" a flattering portrait of Humanity. In reply to the accusation of immorality, he says, "Whoever contributes his stone to the edifice of ideas, whoever proclaims an abuse, whoever sets his mark upon an evil to be abolished, always passes for immoral. The reproach of immorality, which has never been spared the courageous writer, is, besides, the last which remains to make when there is nothing else to say to a poet. If you

are true in your portraits; if, by dint of daily and nightly toil, you succeed in writing the most difficult language in the world, the word immoral is thrown in your face. Socrates was immoral, Jesus Christ was immoral; both were persecuted in the name of the societies which they overthrew or reformed. When any one is to be slaughtered he is taxed with immorality. This manœuvre, familiar to all parties, is the shame of all who employ it." To attempt to add anything to this vindication would be both presumptuous and superfluous. It is not for the critic to constitute himself the advocate of the author he criticizes, still less his apologist; for the author must always be his own advocate, and, instead of apologizing, the critic must condemn. But Balzac has passed altogether beyond the range of criticism —as much beyond it as Byron, Shelley, Scott, and Thackeray. He may have his commentators and annotators, but criticism is an impertinence; for the man is dead and beyond it, and the author is immortal and above it.

How comes it, then, that the works of this astounding genius are almost unknown to us, or, at least, almost untranslated into our language? Partly, no doubt, on account of their presumed immorality, partly because of the wide difference between the tone of English and French society,

and partly because the elevated style and serious purpose of many of them render them a study rather than an amusement. Such tales as "Cæsar Birotteau," "Le Cousin Pons," "Le Médecin de Campagne," and "Le Curé de Village," although works of great genius, are too deficient in plot and dramatic interest to be considered novels in the ordinary sense, and "La Recherche de l'Absolu" and "Louis Lambert" are what the author calls them, philosophical studies. The study of the "Comédie Humaine" is an education in itself; only the student must have taken a pretty good preliminary degree to be able to rise to the level of his teacher. What sort of an education it must have required to be able to write it may be gathered from the *avant propos*, which is not only itself a profound philosophical treatise, but contains quotations, citations, and indications of a course of reading formidable enough to shake the courage of the boldest aspirant to tread in the footsteps of the master, and make him pause and gauge his strength for such a training.

No doubt, the deep thought and profound reasoning of many of these tales are against their attractiveness as works of fiction, and almost exclude them from the category of "light reading;" no doubt, the subject of some of them is painful, and of some repulsive; no doubt, they deal with and describe a

state of morals and manners of which we, on this side of the Channel, have little knowledge, and with which we have still less sympathy; but these objections apply only to a small portion of the great work, which, as a whole, is founded on human nature—and that foundation is surely broad enough to include and interest us.

How comes it, then, that whilst the works of Sue, Dumas, Soulie, and a host of inferior French authors, are almost as well known (by translation) to the English reading public as they are at home, Balzac is known to us scarcely more than by name? The question remains to be answered. In the mean time, if the English reading public have neglected Balzac, English authors certainly have not. They have not translated him, but they have adapted and adopted him, and his influence on English literature is to be traced as distinctly as was that of Sir Walter Scott on continental literature in his day.

Perhaps one reason why he has not been more extensively translated is that readers sufficiently educated to appreciate his works would be able to read them in the original, and so insure a far greater treat than they could from any translation. That is an explanation highly creditable to the reading public. Some few of the tales have been done into English, and amongst these one of the best known and most

popular is "Eugénie Grandet," for whose popularity it is somewhat difficult to account; for, although a work of great genius, its subject is sad and painful, and will be further considered by-and-by. For the reasons already given, it is scarcely probable that any translation of the entire "Comédie Humaine" into English will ever be attempted, and the present writer has not the presumption to attempt a thorough analysis of the great work; but, deeply impressed himself by its extraordinary genius, he proposes to give a general outline of it, a *catalogue raisonné* of the various tales in their due order, so that the reader may form an idea what kind of a work is the "Comédie Humaine," and, if he pleases, cultivate a further acquaintance with any of its scenes that take his fancy.

These are classified under the heads of Private, Provincial, Parisian, Political, Military, and Country Life, and Philosophical and Analytical Studies. A portion of them were first grouped together under the general title of "Études des Mœurs au 19e Siècle." The idea of welding the whole into the grand "Comédie Humaine" was one of gradual and after growth. Some few of them, particularly "Catherine de Medicis," appear rather out of place, and are decidedly incongruous in point of date; for Catherine, however remarkable a character, could not have

influenced the manners of the nineteenth century. But she was the contemporary of a certain Sieur de Balzac, Seigneur d'Entragues, from whom the author claimed to be descended, and it is not impossible that the vanity of the man, which was intense, may have had something to do with the author's choice of a subject. It must be remembered also that "Catherine" was written before the idea of the "Comédie Humaine" had been conceived. What this already stupendous work would have become, if Balzac had been spared to complete it, may be imagined from the melancholy list of skeleton titles he has left behind him; the eighty tales of which it now consists are of very unequal lengths, each perfectly distinct and complete in itself, yet connected together by the constant reappearance of the same characters at different periods of their career, and forming a symmetrical whole. The most incomplete portion is the "Scenes of Military Life," for this branch of the subject, naturally so attractive to an author, consists only of one tale and a fragment. "Les Chouans" was the first of Balzac's avowed works, and is one of the best. A strange feature of his career as a novelist is that his reputation was first established by the "Physiologie du Mariage," which is not a novel at all, but a misogamic satire on marriage—in form an

exact copy of Brillat-Savarin, in style a continuation of Jonathan Swift. "Les Petites Misères de la Vie Conjugale" is a rather more playful treatment of the same subject; but they are neither of them novels nor tales in any sense, although they are included in the "Comédie Humaine." To this great work we propose to confine our attention, without noticing the theatrical pieces or the "Contes Drolatiques," which latter are an imitation of the language and style of the fifteenth century—and that will probably be a sufficient explanation of them to those acquainted with the literature of the fifteenth century.

The sequence in which the tales were finally arranged is so different from that in which they were written, that it may be interesting to compare the two, and we give the two lists for that purpose. The idea of the "Comédie Humaine" as a whole did not occur to the author until he had been at work for six years, and a great many of the tales had appeared; these must have been afterwards revised and reconstructed so as to fit into the general design. The mere list of titles in chronological order will perhaps give a better impression of the amount of work accomplished in the time than any other way of putting it; and when we consider the peculiarly laborious style of composition adopted by

the author, the performance becomes all the more astonishing. This is the order of composition:—

1827. Les Chouans.
1828. Catherine de Médicis.
1829. La Physiologie du Mariage; Gloire et Malheur; Le Bal de Sceaux; Il Vertugo; La Paix du Ménage.
1830. La Vendetta; Une Double Famille; Étude de Femme; Gobseck; Autre Étude de Femme; La Grande Breteche; Adieu; L'Elixir de Longue Vie; Sarrazine; La Peau de Chagrin.
1831. Madame Firmiani; Le Réquisitionnaire; L'Auberge Rouge; Maître Cornélius; Les Proscrits; Un Episode sous la Terreur; Jesus Christ en Flandre.
1832. La Bourse; La Femme Abandonnée; La Grenadière; Le Message; Les Marana; Louis Lambert; L'Illustre Gaudissart; Le Colonel Chabert; Une Passion dans le Desert; Le Chef-d'œuvre Inconnu; Le Curé de Tours.
1833. Seraphita; Eugénie Grandet; Ferragus; Le Médecin de Campagne.
1834. Un Drame au Bord de la Mer; La Duchesse de Langeais; La Fille aux Yeux d'Or; Le Père Goriot; La Recherche de l'Absolu.

1835. Le Contrat de Mariage; La Femme de Trente Ans; Le Lis dans la Vallée; Melmoth Reconcilié.

1836. La Vieille Fille; L'Enfant Maudit; Facino Cane; La Messe de l'Athée; L'Interdiction.

1837. Le Cabinet des Antiques; La Maison Nucingen; Gambara; Cæsar Birotteau.

1838. Une Fille d'Éve; Les Employés, ou la Femme Supérieure.

1839. Pierre Grassou; Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan; Massimila Doni; Pierrette.

1840. Z. Marcas; La Revue Parisienne.

1841. Mémoires de Deux Jeunes Mariées; Ursule Mirouët; Une Tenebreuse Affaire.

1842. La Fausse Maîtresse; Albert Savarus; Un Début dans la Vie; Un Ménage de Garçon.

1843. Honorine; Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes; Illusions Perdues.

1844. Beatrix; Modeste Mignon; Gaudissart II.

1845. Un Prince de la Bohème; Esquisse d'Homme d'Affaires; Envers de l'Histoire Contemporaine; Le Curé de Village.

1846. Les Comédiens sans le Savoir; Les Parents Pauvres (La Cousine Bette; Le Cousin Pons).

1847. Les Paysans.

The final classification was as follows :—

Scènes de la Vie Privée.

Vol. 1. La Maison du Chat-qui-pelote ; Le Bal de Sceaux ; La Bourse ; La Vendetta ; Madame Firmiani ; Une Double Famille.

„ 2. La Paix du Ménage ; La Fausse Maîtresse ; Etude de Femme ; Autre Étude de Femme ; La Grande Bretêche ; Albert Savarus.

„ 3. Mémoires de Deux Jeunes Mariées ; Une Fille d'Eve.

„ 4. La Femme de Trente Ans ; La Femme Abandonnée ; La Grenadière ; Le Message ; Gobseck.

„ 5. Le Contrat de Mariage ; Un Début dans la Vie.

„ 6. Modeste Mignon.

„ 7. Beatrix.

„ 8. Honorine ; Le Colonel Chabert ; La Messe de l'Athée ; L'Interdiction ; Pierre Grassou.

Scènes de la Vie de Province.

„ 9. Ursule Mirouët.

„ 10. Eugénie Grandet.

„ 11. Les Célibataires, 1 ; Pierrette ; Le Curé de Tours.

Vol. 12. Les Célibataires, 2; Un Ménage de Garçon.
,, 13. Les Parisiens en Province; L'Illustre Gaudissart; La Muse du Département.
,, 14. Les Rivalités; La Vieille Fille; Le Cabinet des Antiques.
,, 15. Le Lis dans la Vallée.
,, 16. Illusions Perdues, 1; Les Deux Poètes; Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris.
,, 17. Illusions Perdues, 2; Un Grand Homme de Province; Ève et David.

Scènes de la Vie Parisienne.

,, 18. Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes; Esther Heureuse; A Combien l'Amour Revient aux Vieillards; Où Mènent les Mauvais Chemins.
,, 19. La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin; Un Prince de la Bohème; Un Homme d'Affaires; Gaudissart, II.; Les Comédiens sans le savoir.
,, 20. Histoire des Treize; Ferragus; La Duchesse de Langeais; La Fille aux Yeux d'Or.
,, 21. Le Père Goriot.
,, 22. Cæsar Birotteau.
,, 23. La Maison Nucingen; Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan; Les Employés; Sarrazine; Facino Cane.

Vol. 24. Les Parents Pauvres, 1 : La Cousine Bette.
,, 25. Les Parents Pauvres, 2 : Le Cousin Pons.

Scènes de la Vie Politique.

,, 26. Une Tenebreuse Affaire; Un Episode sous la Terreur.
,, 27. L'Envers de l'Histoire Contemporaine; Madame de la Chanterie; L'Initié; Z. Marcas.
,, 28. Le Děputé d'Arcis.

Scènes de la Vie Militaire.

,, 29. Les Chouans; Une Passion dans le Desert.

Scènes de la Vie de Campagne.

,, 30. Le Médecin de Campagne.
,, 31. Le Curé de Village.
,, 32. Les Paysans.

Études Philosophiques.

,, 33. La Peau de Chagrin.
,, 34. La Recherche de l'Absolu; Jesus Christ en Flandre; Melmoth Reconcilié; Le Chef-d'œuvre Inconnu.
,, 35. L'Enfant Maudit; Gambara; Massimila Doni.
,, 36. Les Marana; Adieu; Le Réquisitionnaire;

El Verdugo; Un Drame au Bord de la Mer; L'Auberge Rouge; L'Élixir de Longue Vie; Maître Cornelius.

Vol. 37. Sur Catherine de Médicis; Le Martyr Calviniste; La Confidence des Ruggieri; Les Deux Rêves.

„ 38. Louis Lambert; Les Proscrits; Seraphita.

Études Analytiques.

„ 39. Physiologie du Mariage.

„ 40. Petites Misères de la Vie Conjugale.

To begin, then, with the first volume of the popular edition, "classified according to the indications of the author," opening the "Scenes of Private Life." This contains six tales, all of which, I think, may be warranted harmless, and are too short to require further notice, except the third and sixth. "La Bourse" is one of the most charming little bits of love, innocence, and nature in all Balzac. This purse contains a gem which the British public certainly ought to have an opportunity of admiring, and I have ventured to attempt to lay it before them, or rather, to show them what must necessarily be a very imperfect imitation. But as the story is short, and any translation, however weak, must be better than a mere summary, I refrain from attempting to

give here any idea of what it is like; for the charm of this little Parisian idyll consists not at all in its incidents, but in the manner in which it is told.

"Une Double Famille" is an equally fine specimen of the master, but in a widely different manner. As its title denotes, it is the story of two families—one legitimate, the other illegitimate. A man of talent, integrity, and honour—an eminent lawyer, afterwards a judge—but, unfortunately, endowed with a nature loving and craving for affection in return, driven to desperation by the cold and repulsive bigotry of his wife, a devotee of the most rigid type, finds consolation elsewhere, and becomes the father of a second family. After years of devotion and exemplary conduct, his mistress proves unfaithful to him, and he abandons her. Eventually, one of her sons, accused of a serious crime, is brought before one of the sons of the wife, also a legal functionary; and the wretched father of them both, after explaining the case to his legitimate son, flies from his country, heart-broken and covered with shame. Surely this is a grave lesson of morality; but it is the skill with which it is conveyed that is the most admirable part of it. The narrow-minded bigotry of the wife, who is the slave of her confessor—a priest so rigidly intolerant that he accuses the Holy Father himself of irreligion for taking a more humane and human view

than he of the duties and obligations of a wife—excuses, though it does not justify, the estrangement of the husband; yet his punishment is none the less severe, and it is brought about in the most natural and unstrained manner. But the sketch of Caroline, the future mistress, and her old mother, constantly at work by the window of an old dismal house in a narrow, dark, dirty street of old Paris, with no other amusement in their daily lives than watching the passers-by, is one of those striking portraits we never forget. The fair, fresh face of the young girl, contrasted with the wrinkled, faded countenance of the old mother, and thrown up by the dark, sombre background, stands out like a medallion of alabaster on a ground of black velvet, and impresses the *double famille* powerfully on the memory.

The second volume contains also six tales, all short, except the last, and not particularly noticeable. The fourth contains a very striking dissertation on the decadence of the great families, and the disappearance of the *grande dame* after the Revolution of July, with a definition of the *femme comme il faut* who succeeded her. "La Grande Bretêche" is a tiny drop of the condensed essence of horror, sufficient to produce any quantity of nightmares and bad dreams, so I should be sorry to assist in spreading it; but I fancy it has been already "Englished" in some shape.

"Albert Savarus," which I have also endeavoured to translate, is longer than any of the preceding tales, and more elaborated. It contains one of those descriptions of country-town society in which Balzac so much delighted, and the most striking characters in it are Albert, the hero, and Mademoiselle Rosalie de Watteville, two rival specimens of strong-mindedness. The young lady is about the most self-willed, not to say deliberately wicked, specimen of her sex conceivable. She falls desperately in love with a man she has scarcely seen and never spoken to, who is still more desperately in love with an Italian duchess, who has the misfortune to be married and the eccentricity to be virtuous. This is an awkward dilemma; but the duke is very near promotion, by seniority, to a better world, and in the mean time Albert and the duchess exchange mutual platonisms by post. Rosalie intercepts the correspondence and writes forged letters to the duchess, who, persuaded of the infidelity of Albert, notwithstanding her love for him, on the death of her duke marries another. Albert enters the monastery of the Grande Chartreuse, and Mademoiselle Rosalie has committed all sorts of crimes in vain. She persuades her mother to take her to Paris, and passes a whole season there for the sole purpose of seeing the duchess and making her as miserable as herself, which she does, by giving

her Albert's real letters, and explaining with the utmost candour her own part in the transaction. A thoroughly charming young person! but she meets with a dreadful accident, and spends the rest of her life in works of piety.

In the next volume we come to the first important work of Balzac, certainly one of the most remarkable. The "Mémoires de Deux Jeunes Mariées" is the history of two brides and two marriages, the exact antithesis of each other, told in a correspondence between the two heroines, who have been educated at the same convent. Louise de Chaulieu and Renée de Maucombe are in every respect the exact opposite of each other, and in nothing more dissimilar than in their fate. The married life of Louise, although she has two husbands, is an ecstatic romance from beginning to end, a dream of ideal love, a spasm of passion soon stifled in the grave; that of Renée is a mere matter-of-fact, every-day existence, but it is she who is the most extraordinary creation to have sprung from the brain of a man, for she is the apotheosis of maternity. She marries without love, because she prefers her husband to the convent, but her children inspire her with a love more intense than that of Louise for her husband, and she makes a passion of maternity. The thousand and one forms of this protean passion, the mother's joys and pains,

her rapture and her anguish, her every-day anxieties, the œconomy of the nursery, and, in fact, the complete history of babydom, are given with an exactitude absolutely marvellous. It is said that one of Balzac's works is a text-book for lawyers; it seems to me that the letters of Renée de l'Estorade are an evangel to mothers.

"La Fille d'Éve," the second tale, narrates how a man of the world and a kind husband rescues his young wife from a false position, and saves his own honour, with a tact and delicacy that do him additional honour.

The next volume contains five tales, all interesting and highly pathetic; but in every one of them the interest and pathos depend, more or less directly, on the attachment of married ladies to gentlemen who are not their husbands, which is perhaps a sufficient idea of their contents.

In the next we have another example of Balzac's special powers, a combination of his genius and his experience. The interest of the "Contrat de Mariage" centres in a marriage settlement, in the preparation of which the contracting parties are represented by two notaries, one of the old and one of the new school; and nobody unacquainted with the details of the profession could have described this scene. The interests of the future spouses are, unhappily,



conflicting; and the young notary who acts for the bride, or rather her mother, who has spent the daughter's fortune, prepares for the other side a cunningly baited trap, but is completely foiled by his sagacious senior. The fortune of the husband is saved for the time; but Paul de Manerville is a sheep born to be shorn, and at the end of five years he is stripped clean, and driven from his country by the two women. It is not a pleasant story, but it is very skilfully told, and illustrates another peculiar merit of Balzac, his thorough (theoretical) appreciation of the value of money and his skill at financing—in fiction.

In the next tale, "Un Début dans la Vie," we have some more reminiscences of a lawyer's office, and the nearest approach to humour to be found, perhaps, in all Balzac; for although there is plenty of wit, satire, and sarcasm in the "Comédie Humaine," of genuine, genial fun there is very little indeed. The story is a most amusing one, of a youth who begins life with a most inordinate stock of vanity, which leads him into sad scrapes, and of which he gets rather roughly cured. Having twice proved his ruin, this same vanity at last does him a good turn by urging him to distinguish himself in the army, in which he is compelled to enlist; and after serving for a time, he retires with rank, honour, and a good

civil appointment. So there is some good even in vanity.

"Modeste Mignon," the next long story of the series, and the first to occupy an entire volume, is, perhaps, of all Balzac's works, the nearest approach to the English idea of a novel. It is a love tale pure and simple; and if it has not been translated, it is hard to understand why. Marie Modeste Mignon might be Mary Ann Smith—she is so exactly what a good, pretty, and very romantic young English girl might be. Living with her blind mother in the strictest seclusion at Havre, in the absence of her father, who is seeking his fortune abroad, she manages to indulge her craving for romance by falling in love with Canalis, a celebrated poet, whom she has never seen except in lithograph in a shop-window, but whose works she knows by heart. Under an assumed name, or rather an anagram of her own which must have delighted Balzac (she calls herself O. d'Este, M.), she enters into a correspondence with him, and soon gets involved in a very delightful imbroglio. For Canalis is not only a poet but also a great functionary, and he has a coffer full of love letters, and a private secretary to answer them, to whom he hands over Modeste's first effusion. The secretary carries on the correspondence in the name of the poet, and eventually personates him in an interview

at Havre. Modeste, who finds the sham Canalis a great improvement on the lithograph in the shop-window, at last writes in her own name, and offers her hand and fortune (for her father has returned enormously wealthy) to the poet. Things are now getting serious, and when all this deceit and ringing of the changes comes to light, poor Modeste is left in a position of terrible shame and embarrassment. From this she is rescued by her father, who invites the real and the sham poet to Havre, and allows her to make her own choice between them. On being put to the test, the sham poet, notwithstanding his false personation, proves himself a real gentleman, and the real poet turns out a very prosaic hero. Modeste judiciously chooses the secretary, and the poet consoles himself with an ancient flame, who happens to be a high and mighty duchess, and gets him appointed an ambassador as a reward for his fidelity. So everybody is satisfied, which, perhaps, is not always the result when young ladies fall in love with poets they have never seen, and poets who are swells hand over their love letters to their private secretaries.

We come now to a work impossible to pass over, but very difficult to appreciate justly. It is to me one of the most unsatisfactory of Balzac's novels. I cannot believe that anything he wrote is unnatural,

for nature takes many shapes unknown to most of us, and performs many wonders beyond our comprehension; but the whole tone of "Beatrix" seems to me exaggerated, and its atmosphere unreal and deceptive. The story is too involved for brief description, but it is full of interest and brimful of love—love of all sorts, conceivable and inconceivable, all concentrated upon Calyste du Guenic, a handsome young Breton, brave, noble, and poor as his native soil, with a heart as soft as butter, which is all but melted away by the heat of his passion for Beatrix, notwithstanding her very refrigerating coldness. Calyste loves Beatrix, who makes a fool of him, and is beloved by Felicité des Touches, Charlotte de Kergarouët, and Sabine de Grandlieu, who make fools of themselves. Beatrix, although she inspires Calyste with a passion mad enough to make him attempt to murder her, and strong enough to bring him to the point of death himself, cannot inspire the reader with anything but disgust. Although a *grande dame*, a *marquise*, she is simply a beautiful and heartless coquette, fascinating and fatal, as such creatures usually are. Felicité is an embodiment of superhuman love and self-devotion, and Sabine is such an adoring and adorable young wife that one cannot imagine a husband neglecting her. Altogether "Beatrix" (the book) would scarcely

find favour with English readers; but it contains one of Balzac's marvellously graphic descriptions of an out-of-the-way corner of Brittany before the railway era, which gives it an historic value, and reads like a tale of the fossil inhabitants of the antediluvian world. Guerande, no doubt, still exists; but the Du Guenics, Kergarouëts, and Pen-Hoels of those days must be as extinct as the mastodon or the sedan chair. Let us hope that the morals of Beatrix may be as extinct as they.

The next volume contains five tales, of which the two first require our notice. "Honorine" is a very tender and romantic domestic drama of true Parisian flavour, the story of a husband who, although his wife has deserted him years ago, and been herself forsaken by her lover, still watches over her with more than fatherly care, and secretly provides for her with lavish generosity. Although an eminent and sagacious statesman, he pines for his lost wife, whom he is utterly unable to forget, and his only object in life is to regain her affection and induce her to return to him. As she refuses all communication with him, he endeavours to woo her back by deputy, and entrusts this delicate and perilous duty to his young secretary. Decidedly love-making by secretary is a bad habit. Of course, the usual result follows; the deputy does his deputed wooing too well, and suc-

ceeds too well—on his own account. Nevertheless, the countess returns to her husband, and dies soon after of incompatibility of temper. It is a touching story, and Honorine, despite her incapability of getting her affections into the right focus, is a very delicate and dainty grace of womanhood.

But the next tale, "Le Colonel Chabert," is a *chef-d'œuvre* of such profound genius and such consummate art, that it ought to be universally known. Its drawback is that it is too painful and too painfully true. We have in our literature the portrait of a colonel—a fearless warrior, a tender-hearted man, and a perfect gentleman,—an admirable portrait drawn by a great artist; but Newcome is a tame and every-day person to Chabert. The Englishman sacrifices fortune, station, and friends to an exaggerated point of honour, and goes calmly to die in an almshouse; but the Frenchman resigns not only these, but name, fame, and personal identity, keeping only his "place in the sunshine" and in the workhouse, rather than punish a woman whose infamous conduct has given him an incurable disgust for life. This is the story. Chabert, a colonel of cavalry in the imperial army, falls, at the head of his regiment, in a decisive charge on the field of Eylau, and is officially reported dead. He is actually buried; but, for all that, he is not dead, and manages somehow to crop up again

above ground, with a gaping hole in his skull and a very muddled brain. After years spent in the hospitals and madhouses of Germany, he gets back to Paris, penniless, and so changed by suffering as to be utterly unrecognizable. He finds his wife remarried, the mother of two children, and, like all the rest of the world, she treats him as an impostor. Through the kindness of Derville, an honest and skilful lawyer who appears in many other scenes of the "Comédie Humaine," he obtains indisputable proofs of his identity, and is in a position to obtain restitution, not only of his conjugal rights, but of his fortune. Willing to effect a compromise, he is nearly cajoled by the infamous woman he had married from the streets into a total and formal renunciation of all his rights; but, overhearing by chance that the next thing to be done with him is to get him into a madhouse, he is so overwhelmed with horror and disgust that he gives her his word she shall hear no more of him—and keeps it. Sick of humanity, he loses himself in its dregs, and reburies himself in the workhouse. His fate extorts from Derville a comment that I cannot refrain from giving. "There exist," he says, "in society three men who cannot possibly esteem the world: the priest, the doctor, and the lawyer. They wear black, perhaps, because they are in mourning for all the virtues and for all the illusions." It is true;

for to these three men are laid bare the secrets of the penitent, the patient, and the client—they are compelled to study human nature undisguised and at its worst.

With this melancholy farewell (for the next tales are too short to notice) we pass from the sphere of private to that of provincial life, although the transition is so slight as to be scarcely perceptible. It is difficult to see why the romantic wooing of Mademoiselle Mignon of Havre should be private and not provincial, if the prosaic courtship of Mademoiselle Mirouët of Nemours is provincial rather than private. The author says that "the 'Scenes of Private Life' represent childhood, youth, and their faults, as the 'Scenes of Provincial Life' represent the age of passion, scheming, self-interest, and ambition;" but, to the reader, this classification does not appear to be very strikingly carried out.

Ursule Mirouët, the first of the provincial heroines, gives her name to a regularly goody-goody story, in which all the good people get rewarded and all the wicked punished, in the most orthodox style. But, however good in point of morality, it is far from being one of Balzac's best in point of art or interest. He could not be unnatural, but in this he condescends to be supernatural. The agent of Providence is a ghost who not only reveals the past, which

would be a ghost's proper sphere, but predicts the future, which must surely be beyond his ken. The story is simple. Ursule Mirouët is an orphan, adopted by Doctor Minorel of Nemours, a most amiable old man, who has only one defect—atheism, from which he is converted by his *protégée*, just as he would be in a tract. At his death, Ursule, who has a small income of her own, finds herself quite unprovided for by him, and although the doctor is known to have made a will, it cannot be discovered. It has been stolen and destroyed by one of the heirs; but the shade of the doctor appears to Ursule and reveals the whole transaction, and the thief is eventually compelled to disgorge, after suffering the severest domestic calamity. Ursule is, of course, a charming and particularly pious young person, and is beloved by a charming young man; they are married, and live happy ever afterwards, and so ends the story. The best part of it is the skill with which the sordid fears, and schemes, and rascalities of the doctor's relations and expectant heirs are described. It is dedicated by Balzac to his niece, and I should think any young girl might read it without danger, and, possibly, not without interest.

The next tale is the well-known and popular "Eugénie Grandet," which seems to me as far from being the most moral as it is from being the most

interesting of Balzac's works. Eugénie herself is a very amiable and much injured young woman; her mother is a saint and martyr; but her cousin and lover is a contemptible scoundrel, and her father, the principal person in the story, is a horrible miser. This monster of avarice incarnate keeps his daughter for months a prisoner on bread and water, because she has lent her own money to her cousin, and he only seeks to prolong the life of his wife because, at her death, he must account to her daughter for her fortune, which, however, he manages to cheat her out of. At his death—for he is so far human that he is mortal—Eugénie finds herself enormously wealthy. Forsaken and insulted by her cousin, who believes her poor, she marries a man who, in consideration of sharing her fortune, renounces all claim to her person. Thus the story, which is distressing throughout, comes to an ending which is certainly not consolatory.

So far, life in the provinces does not present itself in a gay or attractive aspect, and its melancholy reaches a climax in the story of "Pierrette." Ursule is a saint, Eugénie is a victim, and Pierrette is a martyr. A young girl of angelic beauty and goodness, she is adopted by two horrible creatures, an old bachelor and an old maid, brother and sister, her cousins. By these wretches she is neglected, persecuted, and literally done to death. That is all the

story of Pierrette. After having our sympathies lacerated to the core by the sufferings and lamentable fate of this innocent and adorable young girl, we can support with tolerable equanimity the misfortunes of the *curé* of Tours, who is only a priest worried by another priest, with true priestly ingenuity.

After all these very proper but intensely dismal and distressing tales, it is really a relief to come to one equally tragic, but infinitely more varied and dramatic. In "Un Ménage de Garçon" we have a larger stage and many more characters—still very bad characters—upon it. The "bachelor," Jean Jacques Rouget, is a rich old imbecile, who is completely under the dominion of a pretty young housekeeper, Flore Brazier, called La Rabouilleuse; but the main interest centres in the Bridau family. Agathe Bridau, the sister of Rouget, a highly virtuous and admirable woman, is a widow and the mother of two sons. Philippe, the elder, a fine, handsome young man, an ex-officer of the Imperial Guard, is a consummate blackguard; Joseph, the younger, plain and slight, an enthusiastic, industrious, and single-minded artist, is an affectionate and devoted son. It is needless to say that, by force of invariable instinct, Philippe is the mother's favourite. This charming youth, after ruining his mother, robbing his brother, and causing the death of his aunt, gets sentenced to five years'

police supervision for participation in a Bonapartist plot, and is sent to Issondun, the town where his uncle Rouget resides. Here he defeats the machinations of Mademoiselle Flore and her lover, whom he kills in a duel. He compels Flore to marry first his uncle, and then, on Rouget's death, himself, and so becomes possessed of the whole of Rouget's property. He then makes his peace with the Bourbons, becomes a great personage, cuts his mother and brother, and leaves his wretched wife to starve. In the end, he loses most of his property, and perishes miserably in Algeria. Agathe dies of a broken heart, and Joseph becomes a celebrated painter, and inherits the remains of his brother's fortune and the title of count. There could not be a much greater villain than Philippe Bridau, but his career is adventurous and exciting to read, and he does not escape Nemesis. Agathe is one of those mothers whose only fault it is to love her child "not wisely but too well;" and Joseph is a very refreshing contrast to his brother.

After all these terrible tragedies, we come, at last, to a gleam of comedy. "L'Illustre Gaudissart," although he also is a victim, is only the victim of a mystification—in plain English, a sell—and we can thoroughly relish a good laugh at the illustrious, but sold, bagman. "La Muse du Département" is not at all a tragic Muse either, but she is a very naughty

Muse, for she leaves her husband to go and live with a male author; where, I am sure, the Muse of English translation would not follow her.

"La Vieille Fille" is still in the comic vein, and is one of the most Balzacian scenes in the "Comédie Humaine," worthy of being the joint production of Sterne and Swift; for it combines the naïve drollery of Lawrence with the caustic cynicism of Jonathan. The Chevalier de Valois, with his enormous nose, his diamond earrings, the wool in his ears, his extreme care of his person, and minute attention to his toilette; his patient angling for the old maid as long as there is a chance of catching her, and his sudden falling to pieces, the awful wreck he becomes, when she is lost to him for ever—is a character never to be forgotten. The *grisette* Suzanne, who makes such splendid capital out of an imaginary misfortune, is admirable; and the old maid herself—good, simple, hot-blooded Mademoiselle Cormon, who longs so ardently for a husband, and is so ludicrously ignorant, and so continually and cruelly deceived, that one never knows whether to laugh at or pity her most—is one of the most original and striking of Balzac's creations.

"Le Cabinet des Antiques" introduces us to an old maid of another sort, Mademoiselle Armande d'Esgrignon, a patrician and once beautiful lady, who has remained single in order to devote herself

to the orphan son of her brother. This young man turns out a sad scapegrace, and commits a forgery at Paris, for which he is arrested at Alençon, the scene of the story. He is discharged, and the honour of the family is saved by an old notary, devoted to them; but this tale is not calculated to make us desire very eagerly to see the French system of jurisprudence introduced amongst us. Not only in this, but in every similar case—and there are many in the "Comédie Humaine"—the guilt or innocence of the party accused seems to have very little to do with his fate; the result depends entirely on the amount of influence that can be brought to bear on the various judges and functionaries concerned in it. Thus, Victurnien d'Esgrignon escapes the punishment of his crime solely because Diane de Maufrigneuse, the great lady for whose sake it was committed, promises promotion, if he is acquitted, to the public prosecutor and the judges before whom he appears; and there is little doubt that the system remains unchanged to the present day.

"Le Lis dans la Vallée" is called by its author "one of the most highly finished stones of the edifice," and it is certainly not the least interesting nor the least touching episode of the great epic. It is the story of a terrific struggle between love and duty in the breast of a charming and unhappy woman,

in which duty is always victorious, but, at last, only by the aid of death. Madame de Mortsauf is a lily of purity, a most hapless conjugal martyr, and she is drawn with equal power and pathos. Married to a man who in his best moments is a fool, and in his worst a madman; immured in a lovely but lonely valley, where she has neither society nor amusement, she naturally welcomes with avidity the arrival of a stranger in her dismal home. The stranger, being young and amiable, is too agreeable a contrast to the husband not to attract easily the affections of the wife, who, however, remains faithful to her duty and her children, and dies in the effort it costs her. No tale could be more tender and touching, but the picture is spoiled by the frame. This lofty history of heroic virtue and self-sacrifice is told by the man who had evoked it to his mistress, who shows her appreciation of it and him by dispensing with a lover with such souvenirs.

We come now to a work which demands far deeper and more careful consideration than any we have yet met with or shall meet with. "Les Illusions Perdues" is the title given to the longest, the most varied, and the most comprehensive of all Balzac's novels. It is, in fact, an epitome of the "Comedie Humaine," bringing us face to face with human nature in its most contrasted forms, its beauty and

its hideousness neither softened nor exaggerated. It is more than twice the length of any other, and, although classed amongst the provincial scenes, is pretty equally divided between town and country, and forms the connecting link between Paris and the provinces. We begin by making the acquaintance, at Angoulême, of Sechard, an ignorant, drunken, miserly old printer, who has a son David, talented, modest, and amiable, to whom he resigns his business on terribly hard terms. David is in love with Ève, the daughter of Madame Chardon, a very poor widow, and the sister of Lucien, the hero of the tale. Lucien is a poet, a genius, and a wonderfully handsome young man. As a poet, he is patronized by Madame de Bargeton, the great lady of Angoulême, and his beauty is not less admired than his genius by this intellectual but bored blue-stocking, whose husband is an elderly dummy. Their relations, although exceedingly tender, are perfectly proper, improper relations being so very difficult to manage comfortably in a country town; but the society of Angoulême, which does not appreciate beauty and genius unless they are of its own class, is highly disgusted at them. One of these offended members of society, having talked scandal of Madame de B. and her poet, is shot in a duel, with as few words and as straight an aim as possible, by her taciturn

husband, and the lady, to prove the falsity of the scandal, carries off the poet to Paris. Éve and David, who are on the point of being married, manage to provide Lucien, who, of course, is perfectly penniless, with a small sum of money, with which he betakes himself to the proper sphere of genius—to Paris; and here ends the first part.

Now begins the disillusionizing of the poet. Madame de Bargeton has been followed to Paris by one of her admirers, Chatelet, an old beau and man of the world, who, before she has time to compromise herself with Lucien, manages to separate them. In a very short time the two provincials, comparing each other with the brilliant wits and beauties by whom they are surrounded, experience a great revulsion of feeling. The poet finds his mistress lean, faded, and gawky; the lady thinks her lover awkward, ill bred, and badly dressed, and at last Madame de Bargeton decidedly cuts Lucien and leaves him to his fate. The luckless poet, who has brought from Angoulême a volume of sonnets and a novel, wherewith to take Paris by storm, endeavours to find a publisher, and only finds out his mistake. He makes the acquaintance of Daniel d'Arthez, who is the head of a Cénacle, or circle of young men, all extremely talented, virtuous, and poor; and Lucien, although cordially welcomed and treated with more

than brotherly affection by them, soon finds that his virtue is not robust enough for the Cénacle. Through the medium of another casual acquaintance, he takes to journalism, very much to the disgust of his friends, who predict his ruin. And truly, if Parisian journalism is, or was, anything like the slough of corruption depicted by Balzac, the Cénacle were right, and the man who ventured thereon was lost, utterly lost to honour, honesty, and self-respect. At first, however, it is a land of promise and delight to Lucien. Everything prospers with him. His first articles have an enormous success; his co-contributors lend him their aid to procure the publication of his works, and to overwhelm with ridicule Chatelet and Madame de Bargeton. One of the most charming actresses of the day falls madly in love with him, and the crowning moment of his triumph is when, dressed in the height of elegance and sitting by her side in her carriage, he meets his former mistress, and does not recognize her. But this brilliant burst of success is like the flight of a rocket; the poet soars for an instant into the heavens of superiority, with a blaze of triumph, and then falls to the earth, extinguished for ever. Very soon the good fellowship of his comrades of the press turns to envy, hatred, and treachery. Instead of assisting, they plot against him; and Madame de Bargeton and her cousin Madame

d'Espard, a very great lady whom he has mortally offended, complete his ruin by inducing him to quit the Liberals, with whom he has at first sided, for the Royalists. He loses, of course, the confidence of one side without gaining that of the other. Reduced to the greatest misery, he is compelled to write an unfavourable and insulting criticism on a work just published by D'Arthez, for which he is challenged and severely wounded by one of the members of the Cénacle. During his long illness, he is nursed and supported by Coralie, the actress, who at last wears herself out with anxiety and fatigue, and dies, leaving Lucien friendless and penniless. In his weakness, misery, and despair, he has no other means of paying for her funeral than writing merry songs to order, for a low publisher; which he does. Then, with a few francs in his pocket, he sets out to make his way to Angoulême on foot, and on one of the last stages of his journey he gets up behind a travelling carriage, which turns out to be that of Madame de Bargeton, now married to Chatelet, who has been appointed *préfet* of Angoulême. Lucien is recognized, and after this crushing humiliation he is stricken with fever at a little place a short distance from his native town, whither the story precedes him.

During his short stay in Paris, this fatal genius has contrived not only to ruin himself, but his

magnanimous brother-in-law and his devoted sister. Ève and David, hampered, at the outset of their matrimonial career, by the avarice and chicanery of old Sechard, who has simply swindled his own son, and by their sacrifices for Lucien, are scarcely able to provide for their own very moderate necessities. David possesses a secret which is to be a source of future fortune; but whilst he is pursuing his experiments for improving the manufacture of paper, he is thunderstruck by a letter from Lucien, announcing that he has drawn three bills of one thousand francs (£40) each on him, signed his name to them, and discounted them. David must either acknowledge the bills or denounce his brother-in-law as a forger. He submits to be ruined without a word of reproach. He is sued on the bills, which he is utterly unable to pay, and whilst he is in hiding from the officers of the law, Lucien arrives and, horror-struck at the misery he has caused, determines to make an effort to repair it. He obtains from Madame du Chatelet the promise of a Government grant to David as an inventor; but before it can be obtained, a letter of his is made use of to lure David from his hiding-place, and he is arrested. Once in the hands of his creditors and enemies, the rival printers of the town, his experiments are stopped and his ruin completed. Lucien, overwhelmed with despair at the mischief

he has again, although this time involuntarily, caused, and unable to endure the mute reproaches of his mother and sister, determines to put an end to his ill-starred existence. On his way to a certain deep pool he has chosen as his death-and-burial place, he is met by a Spanish priest, who divines his intention and persuades him out of it. The priest is also a secret diplomatic agent, and appears enormously wealthy; he offers to adopt Lucien, to make his fortune, to avenge him on his former enemies, and place him in a far more brilliant position than he has ever occupied. This prospect is naturally more tempting to the despairing poet than the deep and silent pool, and he returns once more to Paris in the carriage of the priest, who gives him, then and there, a sum to send to David more than sufficient to pay all his debts. With Lucien's usual fatality, the money only arrives just as Sechard has assigned his invention to the rival printers, who eventually reap all the benefit of it. Old Sechard, however, dies soon after, and Ève and David at last obtain wealth and peace, and leisure to enjoy their well-proved love.

This is a dry skeleton of the story of the "Illusions Perdues," but it is impossible to give any idea of the life and soul with which this skeleton is endowed by Balzac. The weak, impulsive, feminine character of Lucien; the tender, unchanging love of Ève; the

simple self-devotion of David, and the avarice and drunken craft of old Sechard; the wavering sentimentality of Madame de Bargeton, and the intense passion of Coralie—cannot be described in a few sentences, but these constitute the life of the work. The descriptions of the society of Angoulême, the literary and theatrical world of Paris, and the low intrigues and base treachery by which David is despoiled of the fruits of his invention, surround it with an atmosphere of reality which supports its vitality. Certainly, some of these descriptions are startling in their reality, almost overpowering in their strength. The hideous corruption of the Paris press, the abominable treachery and shameful ingratitude of Petit Claud (one of those utterly unscrupulous country lawyers Balzac delighted to draw) and his employers and accomplices, are not pleasant extracts from nature, and the love of Coralie is too vividly and circumstantially described for the ears of youth and innocence; but the author avowed that he could not pretend to adapt nature for the use of girls' schools. The "Illusions Perdues" is too strong meat for babes and sucklings, but its moral is obvious, and becomes still more striking in the sequel.

We shall only glance at the "Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes," because it is the sequel, and completes the history of Lucien and the moral of the

"Illusions Perdues." In order to arrive at this, it is only necessary to explain that the pretended priest and diplomatist, Lucien's protector, is in reality an escaped convict, a man of extraordinary strength, courage, and intellect, a prince of evil, who has the command of large sums of money on behalf of his fellow-criminals. For some years he sustains his assumed character in Paris, unsuspected, and enables Lucien to lead a life of luxury and apparent honour, amongst the very highest society; but at last, becoming suspected, they are both of them arrested and accused of the murder of Esther the *courtisane*, the mistress of Lucien. They have neither of them had any hand in this: but Lucien is entrapped, by a judge specially bribed to do so, into a confession of the real character of his protector, and, unable to endure the consequent ignominy and the ruin of all his hopes, he commits suicide in his cell, *et voilà "où mènent les mauvais chemins."* Give way to temptation, and after your short spell of pleasure, you shall come to grief, prison, and *felo de se:* that is the moral. Is it a good or a bad one?

There is yet another sequel to this sequel, "La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin," in which we see the last of the terrible person who is really the hero of the preceding tale. Vautrin, Carlos Herreva, or Jacques Collin, is one of the strongest creations

of Balzac, and his struggle with the police agents is fearfully exciting and interesting. In the end, he is vanquished by the law, and elects to serve the power against which he cannot contend; instead of a chief of bandits, he becomes a chief of the police. Moral, *Magna est lex et prævalebit.* Is that a bad one?

Unfortunately, this vindication of the force and majesty of the law is rather contravened in the "Histoire des Treize," which shows how a band of determined men, combined to carry out their own objects regardless of the law, may defy it with impunity. Assuming that such an association ever existed, the three tales which comprise the "Histoire des Treize" may pass for credible; but, although splendid specimens of the author's talents, none but the first could pass muster with English readers. The theme of "Ferragus" is love conjugal; of the "Duchesse de Langeais," love extra-conjugal; and of the "Fille aux Yeux d'Or," love extra-natural. The tone of the first is good; of the second, doubtful; of the third, horrible. The last tale ought not to have been written, and, at least, ought not to be read; yet, strange to say, it is by no means unknown, nor even unmentioned by English authors.

With the "Splendeurs et Misères" commence the "Scenes of Parisian Life," over which we must pass lightly, for this division of the "Comédie Humaine"

contains more that is utterly antagonistic to all English notions of propriety than all the other parts together. These scenes deal principally with sentiments and passions, not exaggerated perhaps, but carried to their very highest pitch. If Madame Jules is the perfection of pure love, Esther the *courtisane* and the Duchesse de Langeais are the types of passion, illicit, but self-sacrificing enough to be heroic; Le Père Goriot is the blindest, tenderest, and strongest expression of the paternal instinct; Cæsar Birotteau is the champion and martyr of shop-keeping pride and commercial honour; Pons and Schmucke are the Damon and Pythias of modern life; and, lastly, Madame Marneffe represents, let us hope, the very utmost extreme of feminine depravity. It is an odd coincidence that these scenes, on the whole so repugnant to our ideas, should, nevertheless, contain some of the most virtuous and affectionate wives—wives of the English pattern—who do their duty without knowing that it is a duty or feeling it irksome, and remain faithful to their husbands, not after a severe struggle with a stronger affection for some one else, but simply because they love their husbands and no one else. Besides Madame Jules in "Ferragus," already mentioned, Constance Birotteau and Madame Rabourdin of the "Employés" are good and true wives, and even

from the slough of the "Cousine Bette" rises the figure of a true and injured wife; but her devotion is extreme, and tainted by the surrounding miasma. This tale, although one of the cleverest of the whole, and one of the most popular in France, exposes a mass of social corruption it is impossible even to hint to an English reader. If such a state of things should ever exist amongst us, it is to be hoped there will never be a Balzac to reveal it.

There is one tale, however, we must not allow to go unnoticed, "Le Père Goriot." The story is highly interesting, but it ought to be read out of its turn, for in it we make what ought to be our first acquaintance with several characters who have appeared at later periods of their career in preceding tales. Rastignac, Bianchon, and the terrible Vautrin figure largely in it for the first time in point of date, and it should certainly come before the "Illusions Perdues." The main feature of the story is the same as that of "Lear," only the unhappy Goriot has a Regan and a Goneril, but no Cordelia. Having given large fortunes to his daughters, Madame de Restaud and Madame de Nucingen, on their marriage, he eventually despoils himself of every penny he possesses for them, and is left to die alone in a garret. The infatuation of the doating father, the inhuman ingratitude of the daughters,

and the old man's constant endeavours to persuade himself and every one else that they are always dutiful and affectionate to him, are told with a reality belonging alone to Balzac. The father shows his affection for one of his daughters in a very singular style, but it is affection, nevertheless, and verily he has his reward.

"Cæsar Birotteau," although a *chef-d'œuvre* in its way, and interesting, no doubt, to any one who wished to study the operation of the law of bankruptcy in France, is far more clever than amusing to the general reader. Poor Cæsar! He is a perfumer, and his grandeur is a ball and his decadence a bankruptcy! (the proper title of the book is "Grandeur et Décadence de Cæsar Birotteau"), and he dies of joy when his bankruptcy is annulled and his creditors are paid in full. "Le Cousin Pons" is one of the least interesting scenes in the "Comédie Humaine."

Amongst the shorter tales of this section, there is one that deserves notice. "Les Employés" was originally called "Une Femme Supérieure," and its heroine is Madame Rabourdin, who is certainly a very superior woman. It is, besides, a very amusing sketch of the inner life of a public office in Paris, and the intrigues of all kinds brought to bear on the promotion of the clerks.

Of the three tales of political life, the two first are entirely dissimilar in style and subject, but equally of the highest interest. "Une Ténébreuse Affaire" contains one of Balzac's most striking heroines. Laurence de Cinq Cygne is an example of that combined force and gentleness which belongs only to the most highly bred animals, and perhaps only to the best-born scions of humanity. To a courage, energy, and endurance thoroughly masculine, she unites tenderness, affection, and devotion entirely feminine, but these opposite qualities, far from being discordant, combine to produce a noble woman, who is yet little more than a girl in age. She is so feminine that she avoids showing any preference for either of her two twin cousins, by both of whom she is beloved, lest she should hurt the feelings of the other; and so masculine that, when these two cousins are unjustly condemned to death, she follows the emperor to the battle-field of Eylau, and obtains their pardon on the eve of the battle. Michel the *régisseur* is also a noble character, a sheep in wolf's clothing, who illustrates Balzac's favourite virtues of fidelity and honour. The whole story of "Une Ténébreuse Affaire" is decidedly tragic, but it is a tragedy of pathos and not horror.

In the "Envers de l'Histoire Contemporaine," Balzac has admirably succeeded in what he admits to be the difficult task of rendering plain virtue and

goodness interesting, for, although the story is exceedingly simple and not at all exciting, it is so absorbing that no reader, having commenced, could leave off without finishing it. Madame de la Chanterie is the most sublime figure in the "Comédie Humaine." An unhappy wife, an unhappy mother, a woman persecuted and outraged by men, abandoned, seemingly, by Heaven, she never despairs of humanity nor doubts of Providence, but only seeks to forget her own misfortunes in solacing those of others, and becomes, as far as it is possible to human nature, the perfect representative on earth of divine charity.

"Le Député d'Arcis," the third tale of the series, is not particularly interesting, and deals almost entirely with persons who have appeared before, but it suggests a query which must occur to most readers: How does it happen that an author so realistic as Balzac should fall into the absurdity of making his characters, when they get into a correspondence, write letters which would each fill a quire of paper?

The "Scenes of Military Life" consist only of one tale and a fragment, and the author, avowing the incompleteness of this portion of his work, announced his intention (never, alas! to be carried out) of considerably enlarging the dimensions of this apparently neglected branch of his subject. "Les Chouans," although so far down in the list, was the first pub-

lished of Balzac's avowed tales, which were not finally classified with any regard to the order in which they were published; for the "Chouans," the first, is very shortly followed by the "Paysans," the last in point of time. The mere title of the first-named tale is suggestive of romance, adventure, and excitement. The semi-heroic, semi-barbaric struggle in the West could not fail to afford to Balzac many impressive situations; it was sure to be reproduced with picturesque vividness by such a master of local colour, and he has at the same time heightened and softened the interest of the bloody drama by infusing into it a vein of individual passion and heroism. The rival stratagems of the Blues and the Whites, the devotion of the ignorant but fanatically loyal peasants, and the trained and enthusiastic soldiers of the Republic, each to their own cause, are vividly and impartially described; the chivalrous daring of the Royalist chief contrasts admirably with the military virtue of the Republican commander; and a passionate and exciting love intrigue is interwoven with the historical events of the Vendean war, and relieves the ferocity of some of its incidents. In short, "Les Chouans" is one of the most interesting and translatable of Balzac's works.

In the "Scenes of Country Life," which represent, the author says, the evening of life, we have three

tales, of which the first, "Le Médecin de Campagne," is little more than a long essay on philanthropy and good government, illustrated by the history of the conversion of a wretched, uncultivated country valley into a busy, thriving, and populous district, by the benevolence and energy of one man—the country doctor. The second, "Le Curé de Village," is a story somewhat similar in the main idea of the improvement of a country neighbourhood, but with a more complicated plot, in which a mysterious crime and a rather incomprehensible repentance are introduced features. But the third, "Les Paysans," is one of the most remarkable scenes of the whole "Comédie."

The interest of the story rests entirely on the intrigues of the neighbouring peasantry, townspeople, and small proprietors to force the Count de Montcornet to part with a splendid and extensive estate he has just purchased. Their object is to have this sold in small lots, so that they may scramble amongst themselves for the spoil, and each grab what he can of it. The count is an old soldier of Napoleon. He is not at all disposed to be driven from his property. He is supported by an able and faithful steward; he has law, justice, the police, and the armed force on his side; but he is completely vanquished by the *paysans*. After having seen his steward murdered, and himself at the mouth of an assassin's gun, he is compelled to

abandon the field of battle to the enemy. The insatiable greed of the richer class of peasants, and their subtle and complicated intrigues, all converging on the count's estate, as well as the cunning, the brutality, the utter lawlessness, and gross immorality of the poorer class, are described with all the force, the minuteness, and the reality of Balzac's genius. The picture is not exactly after the ideas of the admirers of "a bold peasantry, their country's pride," and the believers in rustic innocence and simplicity; it is not at all Arcadian, but it is unquestionably faithful. Nor is "Les Paysans" the pleasantest of Balzac's works to read, but it is one of the cleverest and most instructive.

It was, in fact, the last work of the author, and is really the last scene of the great drama of life, for what follows is but an epilogue. In entering on the "Études Philosophiques," we pass from the study of men and manners to that of sentiments and first causes, and quit the firm ground of reality for the airy regions of imagination and speculation. The idea of "La Peau de Chagrin" is as fantastic as any of Hoffmann's. A young man, on the point of committing suicide, becomes possessed of a talisman which will gratify all his desires, but at every exertion of desire, however slight or involuntary, the talisman —a piece of shagreen, or ass's skin—contracts, and,

as it shrinks, his life shrinks with it. He accepts it, knowing its powers, and it does not seem a bad bargain for a young man to whom the world has become so unpleasant that he is in a hurry to leave it, to acquire the power of enjoying himself to the top of his bent, and killing himself as quick as he pleases with pleasure. But the talisman proves a real gift of the devil. A little enjoyment soon reconciles him to life, and he suffers the most terrible anguish at seeing himself and his shagreen perish by degrees. But he struggles in vain against his doom; the talisman cannot be prevented from shrinking, and he cannot live without desiring, nor desire without dying. It does not occur to him to desire immortality, or he might have placed the talisman in an awkward dilemma. The story is admirably told, and is full of philosophy and science of all kinds; but it has the defect of being impossible, if that is a defect in a novel.

"La Recherche de l'Absolu," although a profound metaphysical study and a work of unquestionable genius, errs on the opposite side of simplicity and want of romantic interest. It is the history of a man, rich, intelligent, amiable, and respected, who ruins himself and his family by his fatal faith in the fables of alchemy, and consumes his wealth, his happiness, and his life in the crucible, in the insensate pursuit of

the philosopher's stone. And yet the man, maniac though he be, is noble and dignified, and is perhaps the only alchemist who has ever been presented to us in such a light. The family are sublime, and Marguerite Claës, the daughter, is the perfection of filial love, as others of Balzac's heroines are the perfection of love in its other relations. When we consider the exquisite and adorable women Balzac has created, we must admit that he knew as much of the nature of the angels as of the demons, and his angelic women have the supreme merit of being always human.

Of the remaining philosophical studies, nearly all are short, and do not demand any particular notice. Two of them, "L'Enfant Maudit" and "Catherine de Medicis," to which we have already referred, are scenes of long-past ages, and seem out of place in the "Comédie Humaine." They are an anachronism which can only be accounted for by their having been written before the idea of the "Comédie" had occurred to their author. The two last tales, "Louis Lambert" and "Seraphita," are Swedenborgian rhapsodies, chiefly interesting as showing the versatility of Balzac's genius and the extent of his reading.

The "Études Analytiques," the "last scenes of all that end this strange, eventful comedy," have, in reality, nothing to do with it. They have no plot

of their own, and are quite unconnected with the plot of the great work. They are certainly studies of manners; but the "Physiologie du Mariage" and the "Petites Misères de la Vie Conjugale" treat their subject from such a decidedly un-English point of view, that they would have very little interest and very little meaning for English readers. In this happy land of love-matches and connubial bliss, with the Divorce Court to fall back upon, to treat the holy estate of matrimony as a state of war and mutual defiance would be an outrage on the fitness of things. They manage these things differently in France; love-matches are rare, the Divorce Court is unknown, and connubial bliss is another kind of bliss than ours. The physiology of marriage presents itself in quite a different aspect, which it would be useless to dwell upon.

We have now travelled fairly through the principal scenes of the great "Comédie Humaine," and although the notice bestowed upon each has been in all cases brief, and in some unsatisfactorily bald, it is hoped that enough has been said to give the reader a general idea of the stupendous scope of the work, and of the distinctive character of the widely varied scenes of which it is composed. The tales of which a translation has been attempted must not, for a moment, be looked upon as the best specimens that could be

selected of the author's genius; they have been chosen simply because they present no special difficulties in translation, and afford a fair amount of variety in style. To venture on the master-pieces would require a master hand; it would require skill, patience, courage, and good luck, to which the present writer has no claim. His aim is simply to introduce the "Comédie Humaine" to the English reader, leaving him to make better acquaintance with it, if so minded, and with this he respectfully takes leave of both.



THE PURSE.

THE PURSE.

THERE is a delicious moment for minds given to expansion—the moment when night exists not yet, and day exists no longer; when the glimmering twilight casts over every object its soft tints or its fantastic reflections, and invites a reverie vaguely wedded with the play of light and shade. The silence which almost always reigns at this instant renders it more particularly dear to the artist, who, collecting his thoughts, places himself at some paces from his work, on which he can labour no longer, and criticizes it, growing enraptured with the subject, whose true significance flashes then on the inner eye of genius. He who has not stood pensive by the side of a friend during this moment of poetic dreams, can with difficulty comprehend its unspeakable privileges. Favoured by the *clair obscur*, the material means employed by art to produce the effect of realities disappear entirely. If it is a picture, the personages represented seem to walk and talk; the

shade becomes shadow, the light daylight, the flesh is alive, the eyes move, the blood runs in the veins, and the dress stuffs glisten. Imagination comes to the aid of every detail and sees only the beauties of the work. At this hour illusion reigns despotically, to be dispelled, perhaps, by nightfall. Is not illusion a sort of mental night which we people with visions? Then, illusion spreads her wings; she carries off the soul into a world of fancies, a world fertile in voluptuous caprices, and where the artist forgets the world positive, yesterday and to-morrow, the future, everything, even to his troubles, light and heavy.

At this magic hour, a young painter—a man of talent, who followed his art for the sake of art alone—had mounted on the double ladder he made use of to paint a large, tall picture, almost finished. There, criticizing and admiring himself in good faith, floating on the current of his thoughts, he sank into one of those meditations which enchant and exalt the soul, caressing and consoling it. His reverie doubtless lasted long. Night fell. Whether he had intended to come off the ladder, or whether he had made an imprudent movement, fancying himself on the floor—for the result did not permit him to have a very clear idea of the cause of his accident—he fell. His head struck on a stool; he lost consciousness, and remained without movement during

a lapse of time whose duration was unknown to him. A soft voice awoke him from the species of torpor in which he was plunged. As soon as he reopened his eyes, the sight of a bright light made him quickly shut them again; but through the veil which enveloped his senses, he could hear the whispering of two women, and feel two young, two timid hands, on which his head reposed. He soon regained consciousness, and was able to perceive, by the glimmer of one of those old lamps called *à double courant d'air*, the most delicious young girl's head he had ever seen—one of these heads which often pass for a caprice of the pencil, but which suddenly realized for him those theories of ideal beauty each artist creates for himself, and from which he derives his talent. The countenance of the unknown belonged, so to speak, to the fine and delicate type of the school of Prudhon, and possessed also the poetry with which Girodet endows his fancy portraits. The freshness of the temples; the regularity of the eyebrows, the purity of the outlines, the chastity strongly stamped on every feature of this countenance, made of the young girl a perfect creature. Her figure was slight and supple; the contour was delicate. Her dress, plain and clean, announced neither riches nor poverty. On coming to himself, the painter expressed his admiration by a look of surprise, and

murmured some confused thanks. He found his forehead bound with a handkerchief, and recognized, notwithstanding the peculiar odour of an atelier, the strong smell of ether, doubtless used to restore him from his swoon; and at length he saw an old woman, who looked like a *marquise* of the *ancien régime,* and was holding the lamp and giving directions to the young unknown.

"Sir," replied the young girl to one of the inquiries made by the painter during the moment in which he was still a prey to all the confusion of ideas produced by his fall, "my mother and I heard the noise of your fall on the floor, and we thought we distinguished a groan. The silence which succeeded alarmed us, and we made haste up. Finding the key in the door, we fortunately ventured in, and found you stretched on the ground without motion. My mother went to get everything necessary to make a bandage and restore you. You are wounded on the forehead—there. Do you feel it?"

"Yes, now," said he.

"Oh, it will be nothing," put in the old mother. "Your head, luckily, struck against this model."

"I feel infinitely better," replied the painter. "I only want a cab to return home. The *portier* will go and fetch me one."

He wanted to reiterate his thanks to the two

unknown; but at every speech the old lady interrupted him with, "Take care you put on some leeches to-morrow, sir, or have yourself bled; take some medicine; take care of yourself. Falls are dangerous."

The young girl glanced stealthily at the painter and at the pictures in the atelier. Her countenance and her looks revealed a perfect modesty; her curiosity was rather absence of mind, and her eyes seemed to express that interest which women take, with such graceful impulsiveness, in all our misfortunes. The two unknown seemed to forget the painter's works in the presence of the painter's sufferings. When he had reassured them as to his state, they left, after examining him with a solicitude equally devoid of obtrusiveness and familiarity, without asking any indiscreet questions, or seeking to inspire him with a desire to become acquainted with them. Their actions were marked with an exquisite simplicity and good taste. Their manners, noble yet simple, produced at first little effect on the painter; but afterwards, when he was thinking over all the circumstances of this event, he was much struck by them.

On arriving at the floor below that on which the atelier of the painter was situated, the old lady exclaimed softly, "Adelaïde, you have left the door open."

"It was to come to my assistance," replied the painter, with a smile of gratitude.

"You came down just now, mother," answered the young girl, blushing.

"Shall we accompany you to the bottom?" said the mother to the painter. "The staircase is dark."

"Thank you, madame, I am much better."

"Take hold of the banister."

The two women remained on the mat to light the young man, listening to the sound of his footsteps.

In order to explain how attractive and unexpected this scene was to the painter, we must add that he had been only a few days installed in his atelier at the top of this house, situated in the darkest and muddiest part of the Rue de Suresnes, almost in front of the Church of the Madeleine, a few steps from his apartments, which were in the Rue des Champs Elysées. The celebrity he had acquired by his talents having rendered him one of the artists dearest to France, he was just getting beyond the reach of want, and enjoying, to use his own expression, his last privations. Instead of going to work in one of those ateliers situated near the barriers, whose moderate rent had formerly been in proportion to the modesty of his earnings, he had satisfied a wish of daily recurrence by saving himself a long walk and a loss of time become more precious than ever to him.

Nobody in the world would have inspired more interest than Hippolyte Schinner, if he would have consented to make himself known; but he did not lightly disclose the secrets of his life. He was the idol of a poor mother who had brought him up at the price of the hardest privations. Mademoiselle Schinner, the daughter of an Alsatian farmer, had never been married. Her tender heart had once been cruelly outraged by a rich man, who did not pride himself on any great delicacy in his amours. The day on which this young girl, in all the splendour of her beauty and in all the pride of her life, underwent, at the expense of her heart and its fairest illusions, that disenchantment which comes upon us so slowly and yet so sharply (for we try to postpone as long as possible our belief in evil, and it always seems to come too suddenly)—this day was a whole age of reflections, and it was also a day of religious ideas and of resignation. She refused the alms of the man who had deceived her, renounced the world, and made her fault her pride. She gave herself up entirely to maternal love, seeking in that, instead of the enjoyments of society to which she had bidden adieu, all her pleasures. She lived by her labour, accumulating a treasure in her son; and later on, one day, one hour repaid her for all the long and slow sacrifices of her poverty. At the last Exhibition, her

son had received the cross of the Legion of Honour. The papers, unanimous in favour of an unknown talent, resounded still with sincere praises. The artists themselves recognized Schinner as a master, and the dealers covered his pictures with gold.

At five and twenty, Hippolyte Schinner, to whom his mother had transmitted her woman's nature, understood better than ever his position in the world. Wishing to restore his mother to the enjoyments of which society had so long deprived her, he lived for her, hoping by dint of glory and fortune to see her, one day, happy, rich, esteemed, and surrounded by celebrated men. Thus, Schinner had chosen his friends from the most honourable and distinguished men. Particular in the choice of his acquaintance, he wished still further to elevate his position, which his talent had already raised so high. By forcing him to remain in solitude, the mother of great ideas, the hard work to which he had been devoted from his youth had allowed him to retain the simple faith which embellishes the first season of our life. His youthful mind was not unacquainted with any one of the thousand forms of chastity which make the young man a being apart, whose heart abounds in felicities, in poesies, in virgin desires, weak in the eyes of worn-out natures, but profound because they are simple. He was endowed with those soft and

polished manners which become the mind so well, and seduce even those who cannot understand them. He was well made. His voice, which sprang from the heart, touched the noble sentiments of other hearts, and bore witness to a true modesty by a certain candour of accent. On looking at him, you felt yourself drawn towards him by one of those moral attractions which the *savants*, fortunately, cannot analyze; they would find in it some phenomenon of galvanism, or the action of some unknown fluid, and would regulate our sentiments by the proportions of oxygen and electricity. These details will perhaps enable people of a bold character, and men famed for their neckties, to understand why, during the absence of the *portier*, whom he had sent to the bottom of the Rue de la Madeleine for a cab, Hippolyte Schinner did not ask a single question of the *portière* about the two persons who had shown him so much good nature. But although he only answered "Yes" and "No" to the questions, natural in such a case, which were asked him by this woman about his accident and the friendly interference of the lodgers who occupied the fourth floor, he could not prevent her from obeying the instinct of a porter; she would talk to him about the two unknown, in the nterests of her policy, and according to the subterranean judgment of her lodge.

"Ah!" said she, "it was, no doubt, Mademoiselle Leseigneur and her mother, who have been living here four years. We don't know yet what these ladies are. In the morning, an old charwoman, who is as deaf and talks as much as a stone wall, comes to do for them up to twelve o'clock; in the evening, two or three old gentlemen, decorated * like you, sir—and one of them has got his carriage and servants, and is worth sixty thousand francs a year, they say—come to see them, and sometimes stop very late. Altogether they are very quiet tenants, like you, sir; and, besides, they are economical, and live on almost nothing. Directly a letter comes they pay for it. It's queer, sir, that the mother goes by a different name to the daughter. Ah! when they go to the Tuileries, mademoiselle is very smart, and never goes out without being followed by the young fellows; but she shuts the door in their face, and quite right too. The landlord would not allow——

The cab came up; Hippolyte heard no more, and returned home. His mother, to whom he related his adventure, re-dressed his wound, and did not allow him to go to his atelier the next day. After a consultation, divers prescriptions were given, and Hippolyte remained three days in the house. During

* *Decoré*—wearing the ribbon of the Legion of Honour or some other order.

this seclusion, his unoccupied imagination reproduced in lively colours, and, as it were, in fragments, the details of the scene which followed his fainting. The profile of the young girl stood out strongly on the background of his inner vision. He saw the withered face of the mother, or felt again the hands of Adelaïde; he recalled a gesture which had not struck him at first, but whose exquisite grace was thrown into relief by recollection; then an attitude, or the tone of a melodious voice embellished by the perspective of memory, suddenly reappeared like an object which, after sinking to the bottom of the water, returns to the surface. And so, the first day he could resume work, he returned early to the atelier; but the visit he was incontestibly entitled to pay his neighbours was the true cause of his haste. He had already forgotten his half-painted picture. At the moment when passion throws off its swaddling clothes, it falls into those inexpressible pleasures which those who have loved can understand. Thus, some people will know why the painter slowly mounted the stairs of the fourth floor, and will be in the secret of the palpitations which rapidly succeeded each other in his heart, the moment he saw the brown door of the modest apartments inhabited by Mademoiselle Leseigneur. This young girl, who did not bear the name of her mother, had awoke a thousand sym-

pathies in the breast of the young painter; he tried to see a similarity of position between her and himself, and endowed her with the misfortunes of his own origin.

Even whilst at work, Hippolyte gave himself up very complacently to thoughts of love, and made a great deal of noise to compel the two ladies to think about him as he was thinking of them. He stayed very late at the atelier, dined there, and then, about seven o'clock, went down to see his neighbours.

No painter of manners has dared to initiate us, perhaps from modesty, into the really curious interiors of certain Parisian existences—into the secrets of those dwellings from which issue such fresh and elegant toilettes, such brilliant women, who, rich out of doors, betray on all sides at home the signs of an equivocal fortune. If the picture is here too candidly drawn, if you find it too much spun out, do not accuse the description which is, so to speak, incorporated with the story; for the aspect of the apartments inhabited by his two neighbours had a great deal of influence on the sentiments and hopes of Hippolyte Schinner.

The house belonged to one of those landlords in whom there exists a profound horror of repairs and embellishments, one of those men who consider their position of a Parisian landlord as a trade. In the

great chain of moral species, these people hold a middle place between the miser and the usurer. Optimists by calculation, they are all faithful to the *statu quo* of Austria. If you talk about moving a cupboard or a door, or opening the most necessary of ventilators, their eyes sparkle, their bile is stirred up, they rear like frightened horses. When the wind blows down some of their chimney-pots, they fall ill, and abstain from going to the Gymnase or the Porte St. Martin on account of repairs. Hippolyte, who, on account of certain embellishments to be made in his atelier, had had *gratis* a comic scene with the Sieur Molineux, was not astonished at the dark and greasy shades, the oily tints, the spots, and other disagreeable accessories which decorated the wooden fittings. Besides, these stigmas of poverty are not without poetry in the eyes of an artist.

Mademoiselle Leseigneur came herself to open the door. On recognizing the young painter, she bowed to him; and at the same time, with Parisian dexterity and the presence of mind given by pride, she turned to close the door of a glazed partition, through which Hippolyte might have caught sight of some linen hanging on the ropes above the economical stove, an old folding-bed, the *braise*, the coals, the flat-irons, the filter, the crockery, and all the utensils peculiar to small establishments. Tolerably clean muslin

curtains carefully concealed this *capharnaum*—a word used to designate familiarly these species of laboratories—badly lighted besides by a borrowed light from a neighbouring courtyard. With the rapid glance of an artist, Hippolyte perceived the destination, the furniture, the general effect, and the state of this first room cut in two. The honourable part, which served at once as antechamber and dining-room, was papered with an old "aurora-coloured" paper, with a velvet border, no doubt manufactured by Reveillon, the holes and spots in which had been carefully hidden with wafers. Prints, representing the battles of Alexander by Lebrun, but in worn-out gilt frames, symmetrically adorned the walls. In the middle of this room was a solid mahogany table, of old-fashioned shape, and worn at the edges. A small stove, whose upright, unbent pipe was scarcely perceptible, stood in front of the fireplace, which was turned into a cupboard. By an odd contrast, the chairs displayed some vestiges of past splendour; they were of carved mahogany, but the red morocco of the seat, the gilt nails, and gimp showed scars as numerous as those of a sergeant of the Old Guard. This room served as a museum for certain things which are only met with in these sorts of amphibious households, objects without a name, partaking at once of luxury and poverty. Amongst other curiosities, Hippolyte remarked a magnificently

ornamental telescope, hanging above the little greenish glass which decorated the chimney. To match this strange piece of furniture, there was a shabby buffet, painted like mahogany—the wood of all others most difficult to imitate—between the chimney and the partition. But the red * and slippery floor, the little bits of shabby carpet placed before the chairs, the furniture, everything, shone with that laborious cleanliness which lends a false lustre to old things, whilst showing up still more strongly their defects, their age, and long service. There reigned in this room an indefinable odour, resulting from the exhalations of the *capharnaum*, mixed with the vapours of the dining-room and the staircase, although the window was left open and the street air stirred the muslin curtains, which were carefully drawn in order to hide the embrasure, where preceding tenants had left signs of their presence in divers incrustations or species of domestic frescoes.

Adelaïde quickly opened the door of the other room, into which she introduced the painter with a certain pleasure. Hippolyte, who had formerly seen in his mother's time the same signs of indigence, remarked them with the singular vivacity which characterizes the first acquisitions of memory, and entered, far

* In the old-fashioned houses of Paris the floors were sometimes of red tiles, and never carpeted all over.

better than another could have done, into the details of this existence. On recognizing the familiar objects of his infancy, this good young man felt neither contempt for this hidden misery, nor pride in the luxury he had just won for his mother.

"Well, sir, I hope you do not feel the effects of your fall," said the old mother, rising from an old-fashioned easy-chair placed at the corner of the chimney, and offering him a seat.

"No, madame. I am come to thank you for your kind offices, and particularly mademoiselle, who heard me fall."

In making this speech, stamped with the adorable stupidity which springs from the first embarrassment of real love, Hippolyte looked at the young girl. Adelaïde was lighting the lamp *à double courant d'air,* no doubt in order to render invisible a candle stuck in a large brass candlestick, and ornamented with some striking designs by an extraordinary guttering. She bowed slightly, went to put the candlestick in the ante-chamber, returned to place the lamp on the chimney, and sat down by her mother, a little behind the painter, in order to be able to look at him at her ease, whilst appearing very much occupied with the burning up of the lamp, whose flame, damped by the moisture of a dull glass, sputtered and struggled with a black and badly cut wick. Seeing the large glass

which adorned the chimney, Hippolyte quickly cast his eyes on it to admire Adelaïde. Thus, the little ruse of the young girl only served to embarrass them both.

Whilst talking to Madame Leseigneur—for Hippolyte gave her this name at all hazards—he examined the drawing-room, but decently and stealthily. You could scarcely see the Egyptian figures of the iron hand-irons in a hearth full of cinders, on which two brands tried to keep together before a sham log of brick, buried as carefully as the treasure of a miser. An old Aubusson carpet, much mended, much faded, and as well-worn as a pensioner's coat, did not cover all the floor, which struck cold to the feet. The walls were ornamented with a reddish paper, representing a China silk with a yellow pattern. In the middle of the wall, opposite the windows, the painter saw a chink and the break produced in the paper by the two doors of an alcove, in which Madame Leseigneur slept, no doubt, which were scarcely masked by a sofa placed before them. Opposite the chimney, over a mahogany chiffonier of a style not without richness and good taste, hung the portrait of a soldier of high rank, which the feeble light did not allow the painter to see distinctly, but, from what he could perceive, he fancied this frightful daub must have been painted in China. At the windows, the red silk curtains were

as discoloured as the red and yellow tapestry of the furniture of this double-functioned room. On the marble of the chiffonier stood a valuable malachite salver, containing a dozen coffee-cups magnificently painted, and manufactured, no doubt, at Sèvres. On the mantelpiece figured the eternal clock of the empire, a warrior guiding the four horses of a chariot, whose wheel bears at every spoke the number of an hour. The wax candles in the candelabra were turned yellow by the smoke, and at each corner of the mantelpiece was a porcelain vase surmounted by flowers, full of dust and garnished with moss. In the middle of the room, Hippolyte remarked a card-table all prepared, with some new cards on it. There was something inexpressibly affecting to an observer in the sight of this poverty painted like an old woman who tries to make her face lie. At this spectacle, every man of sense would have proposed to himself secretly, and from the beginning, this species of dilemma: either these two women are honesty itself, or they live by intrigue and play. But on looking at Adelaïde, a young man as pure as Schinner would believe in the most perfect innocence, and attribute the incongruities of this furnishing to the most honourable causes.

"My child," said the old lady to the young girl, "I am cold; make up the fire, and give me my shawl."

Adelaïde went into the adjacent room, where, no doubt, she slept, and returned, bringing to her mother a cashmere shawl which must have cost a great deal when it was new, for the pattern was Indian; but, old, faded, and full of darns, it harmonized with the furniture. Madame Leseigneur put it on very artistically, and with the tact of an old woman who wishes the truth of her words to be believed. The young girl ran nimbly to the *capharmaum*, and reappeared with a handful of small wood, which she threw boldly on the fire to make it burn up.

It would be difficult to transcribe the conversation which took place between these three persons. Guided by the tact almost always acquired by a childhood spent in misfortune, Hippolyte carefully avoided the least observation relative to the position of his neighbours, seeing around him the symptoms of an embarrassment so badly disguised. The most simple question might have been indiscreet, unless from the mouth of an old friend. Nevertheless, the painter was profoundly affected by this hidden misery; his generous heart suffered; but, knowing how offensive any kind of pity, even the most friendly may appear, he felt ill at ease from the discordance which existed between his thoughts and his words. The two ladies talked at first about painting, for women divine so well the secret embarrassment of a first visit;

perhaps they feel it themselves, and their feminine instinct furnishes them with a thousand resources for putting an end to it. Whilst questioning the young man about the material process of his art, and about his studies, Adelaïde and her mother inspired him with courage to talk. The indefinable workings of their conversation, animated with benevolence, led on Hippolyte quite naturally to let fall remarks or reflections which indicated the nature of his habits and his heart.

Grief had prematurely aged the face of the old lady, doubtless handsome in its day; but there remained nothing but the striking features, the outline—in a word, the skeleton of a countenance which, taken altogether, indicated great refinement; much grace in the play of the eyes, which recalled the expression peculiar to the women of the old court, and which no words can define. These features, so small and so refined, might just as well denote an evil disposition, and indicate feminine cunning and craft carried to a high degree of perversity, as reveal the delicacy of a noble mind. In fact, the feminine physiognomy is so far embarrassing to common observers, that the difference between frankness and duplicity, between the spirit of intrigue and the spirit of honour, is imperceptible. The man endowed with penetrating insight divines the imperceptible shades produced by a profile more or less bold, a dimple more or less

hollow, a feature more or less arched or prominent. The appreciation of these diagnostics is entirely in the domain of intuition, which alone can discover what everybody is interested in concealing. It was the same with the countenance of the old lady as with the apartments she inhabited; it seemed as difficult to tell whether their poverty sheltered viciousness or strict probity, as to decide whether the mother of Adelaïde was an old coquette, accustomed to weigh everything, to calculate everything, and to sell everything, or an affectionate woman, full of nobility and amiable qualities. But at the age of Schinner, the first impulse of the heart is to believe in good; and in contemplating the noble and almost disdainful brow of Adelaïde, and looking into her eyes full of soul and of thought, he inhaled, so to speak, the sweet and modest perfume of virtue.

In the middle of the conversation, he seized the opportunity of talking about portraits in general, in order to have a right to examine the frightful pastel, the colours of which had all faded, and the principal part of its surface fallen away.

"You prize this picture, no doubt, for the sake of the likeness, ladies, for the drawing is horrible," said he, looking at Adelaïde.

"It was done at Calcutta, in great haste," replied the mother in a voice of emotion.

She gazed at the shapeless sketch with the profound abstraction caused by the recollections of happiness, when they awake and fall on the heart, like a beneficient dew to whose refreshing influence we love to abandon ourselves ; but there were also in the expression of the countenance of the old lady the vestiges of an eternal mourning. At least, the painter chose thus to interpret the attitude and the physiognomy of his neighbour, by whose side he came and sat down.

"Madame," said he, "in a very short time the colours of this pastel will have disappeared. The portrait will exist no longer except in your memory. Where you see a face dear to you, others will perceive nothing. Will you permit me to transfer this likeness to canvas ? It will be more firmly fixed on that than it is on this paper. Allow me, as a neighbour, the pleasure of rendering you this service. There are always hours in which an artist is happy to amuse himself, after his grand compositions, by works of a less elevated character, and it will be an amusement for me to reproduce this head."

The old lady heard these words with a start of joy, and Adelaïde cast on the painter one of those concentrated glances which seem to be an emanation of the soul. Hippolyte wished to attach himself to his two neighbours by some tie, and to obtain the

right of mingling with their life. His offer, addressed to the warmest affections of the heart, was the only one he could possibly make; it gratified his artist's pride, and could not offend the two ladies. Madame Leseigneur accepted it without eagerness or reluctance, but with the conscientiousness of great minds which comprehend the extent of the ties formed by such obligations, and constitute them a magnificent eulogy, a proof of esteem.

"This uniform," said the painter, "seems to be that of a naval officer?

"Yes," said she; "it is that of a post captain. Monsieur de Rouville, my husband, died at Batavia, of a wound received in a combat with an English vessel which he encountered on the coast of Asia. He commanded a frigate of fifty-six guns, and the *Revenge* was a ship of ninety-six. The combat was very unequal, but he defended himself so courageously that he kept it up until night enabled him to escape. When I returned to France, Bonaparte was not yet in power, and they refused me a pension. When I renewed my application lately, the minister harshly told me that if the Baron de Rouville had emigrated, I should not have lost him; that he would doubtless have been a rear admiral by this time; in short, his excellency concluded by referring me to I don't know what law of forfeiture. I only took this

step, to which I was urged by my friends, for the sake of my poor Adelaïde. I have always had a repugnance to hold out my hand in the name of an affliction which deprives a woman of speech and strength. I do not like this pecuniary valuation of blood irreparably spilt."

"Mamma, this subject of conversation always upsets you."

At this remark of Adelaïde's, the Baroness Leseigneur de Rouville bowed her head and remained silent.

"Sir," said the young girl to Hippolyte, "I thought that a painter's work was not generally very noisy."

At this question Schinner began to blush at the remembrance of the disturbance he had made. Adelaïde did not finish, and spared him some falsehood by rising suddenly at the sound of a carriage which stopped at the door. She went into her room, and returned immediately carrying two gilt candlesticks holding half-burnt wax candles, which she quickly lighted; and without waiting for the ringing of the bell, she opened the door of the first room, and left the lamp there. The sound of a kiss given and received re-echoed in the heart of Hippolyte. The impatience of the young man to see the person who treated Adelaïde so familiarly was not very quickly satisfied; the new arrivals had a whispered conversa-

tion with the young girl, which appeared very long to him.

At length Mademoiselle de Rouville reappeared, followed by two men whose costume, physiognomy, and aspect were a history in themselves. The first, aged about sixty, wore one of those coats invented, I believe, for Louis XVIII., then reigning, and in which the most difficult of sumptuary problems was solved by a tailor who ought to have been immortal. This artist recognized, assuredly, the art of transition, which was the sole genius of this politically shifting age. Is it not a rare merit to be able to judge one's epoch?

This coat, which the young men of the day may take for a myth, was neither civil nor military, and might pass by turns for military or for civil. Embroidered fleurs-de-lis ornamented the flaps of the tails; the gilt buttons were likewise fleur-de-lised. On the shoulders, two empty straps demanded useless epaulettes. These two military emblems looked like a petition without an address. With the old man, the button-hole of this coat, which was made of blue cloth, was adorned with several ribands. No doubt he always held in his hand his three-cornered hat trimmed with gold cord, for the snowy locks of his powdered hair showed no trace of the pressure of a hat. He did not look more than fifty, and appeared

to enjoy robust health. Whilst proclaiming the frank and loyal character of the old emigrants, his physiognomy also denoted the easy and libertine manners, the gay passions and carelessness, of those mousquetaires formerly so celebrated in the annals of gallantry. His actions, his gait, his manners announced that he would not easily give up either his royalism, or his religion, or his amours.

A truly fantastic figure followed this imposing *voltigeur de Louis XIV.* (such was the nickname given by the Bonapartists to these noble remains of the Monarchy); but in order to paint it properly, it would have to be made the principal object of a picture in which it is only an accessory. Imagine a lean and dried-up personage, dressed like the first, but being only, so to speak, his reflection, or his shadow, if you like. The coat of the one was new; the other's was old and faded. The powder of the hair seemed less white in the second, the gold of the fleurs-de-lis less shining, the shoulder-straps more despairing and more shrivelled up, the intellect weaker, the life further advanced towards the fatal term, than in the first. In short, he realized the saying of Rivarol about Champcenetz: "He is my moonlight." He was only the double of the other—a pale and poor double, for there existed between them the same difference as between the first and the last impression of a lithograph.

This dumb old man was a mystery to the painter, and remained a constant mystery. The chevalier—for he was a chevalier—did not speak, and nobody spoke to him. Was he a friend, a poor relation, a man who accompanied the old gallant like an old lady's companion? Was he the medium between the dog, the parrot, and the friend? Had he saved the fortune, or only the life of his benefactor? Was he the Trim of another Captain Toby? Elsewhere, as at the Baroness de Rouville's, he always excited curiosity without ever satisfying it. Who could recollect, under the Restoration, the attachment which, before the Revolution, united this chevalier to his friend's wife, dead twenty years ago?

The personage who appeared the most modern of these two ancient men advanced gallantly towards the Baroness de Rouville, kissed her hand, and sat down beside her. The other bowed and placed himself at a distance represented by two chairs from his original. Adelaïde came and leant her elbows on the back of the chair occupied by the old gentleman, imitating, without knowing it, the attitude given by Guérin to the sister of Dido in his celebrated picture. Although the familiarity of the old gentleman was that of a father, his liberties appeared for the moment to displease the young girl.

"Well, are you cross with me?" said he.

Then he cast on Schinner one of those oblique glances, full of shrewdness and cunning—a diplomatic glance, whose expression betrayed the prudent anxiety, the polite curiosity of well-bred people, who seem to inquire, on seeing an unknown, "Is he one of us?"

"You see a neighbour of ours," said the old lady, pointing to Hippolyte. "This gentleman is a celebrated painter, whose name must be known to you in spite of your indifference to the arts."

The gentleman noticed the ingenuity of his old friend in the omission of the name, and bowed to the young man.

"Certainly," said he, "I have heard a great deal of his pictures at the last Exhibition. Talent has great privileges, sir," added he, looking at the artist's red riband. "This distinction, which we have to win at the price of our blood and long services, you obtain whilst you are young. But all honours are kindred," added he, putting his hand on his cross of St. Louis.

Hippolyte murmured some words of thanks, and relapsed into silence, contenting himself with admiring with increasing enthusiasm the splendid head of the young girl, by which he was charmed. He soon became absorbed in this contemplation, and thought no more of the poorness of the place. For him, the face of Adelaïde was encircled by a luminous atmo-

sphere. He replied briefly to the questions addressed to him, which he fortunately heard, thanks to a singular faculty of the mind, whose ideas may sometimes become in a manner divided. To whom has it not happened to remain plunged in a reverie, either voluptuous or sad, and hear its voice within his breast, whilst listening to a conversation or a reading? Admirable dualism, which often helps us to have patience with bores! Fertile and smiling, hope spread before him a thousand thoughts of happiness, and he no longer wished to notice anything around him. A child, full of confidence, it seemed to him a shame to analyze pleasure. After a certain lapse of time, he perceived that the old lady and her daughter were playing at cards with the old gentleman. As to the latter's satellite, keeping up his character of a shadow, he stood behind his friend, absorbed in his game, replying to the mute questions addressed to him by the player by little grimaces of approval which replied to the interrogatory movements of the other physiognomy.

"Du Halga, I always lose," said the gentleman.

"You put out badly," replied the Baroness de Rouville.

"For three months I have not won a single game of you," he returned.

"Monsieur le Comte, have you the aces?" asked the old lady.

"Yes. One more scored," said he.

"Will you let me give you my advice?" said Adelaïde.

"No, no; keep in front of me. *Ventre de biche!* it would be losing too much not to have you in sight."

At last the game came to an end. The gentleman took out his purse, and throwing two louis on the table, said pettishly, "Forty francs—as good as gold. And, *diantre!* it is eleven o'clock."

"It is eleven o'clock," said the silent personage, looking at the painter.

The young man, hearing this last word rather more distinctly than the others, bethought him that it was time to retire. Re-entering the world of ordinary ideas, he took advantage of an opportunity to join in the conversation, took leave of the baroness, her daughter, and the two unknown, and went away, a prey to the first delights of true love, without seeking to analyze the little incidents of the evening.

The next day, the young painter experienced a most violent desire to see Adelaïde again. If he had listened to his passion, he would have called on his neighbours at six in the morning, when he came to his atelier. He had sense enough, however, to wait till the afternoon. But, as soon as he thought he might present himself at Madame de Rouville's, he went down; rang the bell, not without some strong palpita-

tions of the heart; and, blushing like a young girl, timidly asked Mademoiselle Leseigneur, who had come to open the door to him, for the portrait of the Baron de Rouville.

"Come in, please," said Adelaïde, who, no doubt, had heard him come down from his atelier.

The painter followed her, bashful and confused, not knowing what to say. So much happiness made him stupid. To see Adelaïde, to listen to the rustle of her dress, after having longed all the morning to be near her, after having got up a hundred times and said, "I will go down!" and not going down, was, for him, such a rapturous existence, that such sensations, too much prolonged, would have exhausted his senses. The heart has the singular power of putting an extraordinary price upon trifles. What joy for a traveller to pick a blade of grass, an unknown leaf, if he has risked his life in the search for them! It is the same with the trifles of love.

The old lady was not in the room. When the young girl found herself alone with the painter, she brought a chair to get down the portrait; but, on perceiving that she could not unhook it without putting her foot on the chiffonier, she turned to Hippolyte, and said with a blush—

"I am not tall enough—will you get it?"

A sentiment of modesty, proved by the expression

of her countenance and the accent of her voice, was the true motive of her request; and the young man, so understanding it, gave her one of those intelligent looks which are the softest language of love. Seeing that the painter had understood her, Adelaïde cast down her eyes with a movement of pride, the secret of which belongs to maidens. Not finding a word to say, and almost abashed, the painter took the picture, examined it gravely by the light of the window, and went away, without saying any more to Mademoiselle Leseigneur than—

"I will soon bring it you back again."

During this rapid instant, they both of them experienced one of those strong agitations whose effects upon the mind may be compared to those caused by a stone thrown into a lake. The sweetest reflections arise and succeed each other, indefinite, multiplied, and aimless, agitating the heart like the retreating circles which for a long while ruffle the water, starting from the spot where the stone was thrown in.

Hippolyte returned to his atelier armed with the portrait. Already his easel was provided with a canvas, a palette was charged with colours; the brushes were cleaned, and the place and the light chosen; and until dinner time he worked at the portrait with the ardour which artists infuse into

their caprices. He returned the same evening to the Baroness de Rouville's, and stayed from nine till eleven.

Except the different subjects of conversation, this evening exactly resembled the previous one. The two old men arrived at the same time, the same game at picquet took place, the same phrases were spoken by the players, the sum lost by Adelaïde's friend was as large as that lost the evening before; only Hippolyte, grown a little bolder, ventured to talk to the young girl.

Thus passed a week, during which the sentiments of the painter and of Adelaïde went through those delicious and gradual transformations which lead the mind to a perfect understanding. Thus, day by day, the look with which Adelaïde welcomed her friend became more friendly, more confiding, more gay, more frank; her voice, her manners, grew more significant and more familiar. They both laughed and chatted, communicated their thoughts to each other, and talked about themselves with the simplicity of two children who, in the space of one day, have become as good friends as if they had known each other for three years. Schinner tried to learn picquet. Ignorant, and a perfect novice, he naturally made blunder on blunder; and, like the old man, he lost nearly every game. Without having yet

confided to each other their love, the two lovers knew that they belonged to each other. Hippolyte took pleasure in exercising his power over his timid love. Many concessions were made to him by the timid and devoted Adelaïde, who was the dupe of those sham estrangements which the least skilful lover or the most simple young girl can invent, and of which they avail themselves continually, as spoilt children abuse their power over their mother's love.

Thus, all familiarities soon ceased between the old count and Adelaïde. The young girl understood the displeasure of the painter, and the ideas hidden in the lines of his forehead, in the brusque accent of the few words he uttered, when the old man kissed without ceremony the hands or the cheek of Adelaïde. On her side, Mademoiselle Leseigneur soon required from her lover a rigid account of his slightest actions. She was so unhappy, so uneasy when Hippolyte did not come, she knew so well how to scold him for his absences, that the painter had to give up visiting his friends, and went no more into society. Adelaïde allowed a woman's natural jealousy to show itself on learning that sometimes, after leaving Madame de Rouville's at eleven o'clock, the painter made some more visits, and appeared in the most brilliant *salons* of Paris. That kind of life, she told him, was bad for his health; and then, with that profound conviction

to which the accent, the actions, and the looks of a loving girl give so much power, she insisted that a man obliged to bestow on several women at once his time and the charms of his mind, could not be the subject of a very strong affection. The painter was thus led on, as much by the despotism of passion as by the exactions of a loving young girl, to live only in this little household, where everything pleased him. In short, never was love more pure or more ardent. An equal faith and an equal delicacy on each side kept this passion growing, without the help of those sacrifices by which many people seek to prove their love. There existed between them a continual exchange of sensations so sweet, that they never knew which gave and which received the most. An involuntary inclination kept their hearts always closely united.

The progress of this genuine sentiment was so rapid that, two months after the accident to which the painter was indebted for the happiness of knowing Adelaïde, their life had become one and the same life. In the morning, when the young girl heard footsteps above her, she could say to herself, "He is there." When Hippolyte returned to his mother's at dinner time, he never missed coming to greet his neighbours; and in the evening he arrived at the usual hour, with the punctuality of a lover. Thus,

the most tyrannical and most exacting of women in her love could not have made the slightest reproach to the young painter; and Adelaïde tasted a boundless and unalloyed happiness in seeing the ideal of which it is so natural to dream at her age realized to its fullest extent. The old gentleman came less frequently, the jealous Hippolyte having replaced him of an evening at the card-table, and in his constant ill luck with the cards. Still, in the midst of his happiness, whilst thinking of the disastrous situation of Madame de Rouville—for he had acquired more than one proof of her distress—he was seized by an annoying idea. Already he had said to himself several times, on returning home, "What! twenty francs every evening?" And he dared not avow to himself his odious suspicions.

He took two months to paint the portrait, and when it was finished, varnished, and framed, he looked upon it as one of his best works. The Baroness de Rouville had not said a word more to him about it. Was it forgetfulness or pride? The painter did not wish to explain to himself the reason of this silence. He plotted joyously with Adelaïde to put the portrait in its place during the absence of Madame de Rouville.

So one day, during the walk which her mother generally took in the Tuileries, Adelaïde went up-

stairs alone, for the first time, to the painter's studio, under the pretext of seeing the portrait in the favourable light in which it had been painted. She remained mute and motionless, given up to a delicious contemplation in which all a woman's sentiments are merged in one. Are they not all summed up in a boundless admiration for the beloved one? When the painter, uneasy at this silence, bent forward to look at the young girl, she gave him her hand, without being able to say a word, but two tears fell from her eyes. Hippolyte took the hand, covered it with kisses, and for a moment they looked at each other in silence, both of them wishing to avow their love, but not daring. The painter kept the hand of Adelaïde in his, and then a mutual warmth and a mutual emotion showed them that both their hearts beat equally strongly. Too deeply agitated, the young girl withdrew herself gently from Hippolyte, and said, with a look full of *naïveté.*

"You will make my mother very happy."

"What! your mother only?" asked he.

"Oh, me? I am too happy already."

The painter bent his head and kept silence, alarmed at the violence of the sentiments which the accent of this speech awoke in his heart. Then, understanding, both of them, the danger of this situation, they went down and put the portrait in its place.

Hippolyte dined for the first time with the baroness, who, in her emotion, and all in tears, wanted to embrace him. In the evening the old emigrant, an old comrade of the Baron de Rouville, paid a visit to his two friends, to inform them that he had been made a vice-admiral. His terrestrial navigations across Germany and Russia had been allowed to reckon as naval campaigns. At the sight of the portrait, he shook the painter cordially by the hand, and exclaimed—

"On my honour, although my old carcase is not worth preserving, I would gladly give five hundred pistoles to see myself as well done as my old friend Rouville."

At this proposition the baroness gave her friend a look, and smiled, whilst allowing the signs of a sudden gratitude to appear on her countenance. Hippolyte thought he could discern that the old admiral wished to offer him the price of the two portraits in paying for his own. His artist's pride, as much as his jealousy, perhaps, took offence at this idea, and he replied—

"If I painted portraits, sir, I should not have taken this one."

The admiral bit his lips, and sat down to his game.

The painter remained by Adelaïde, who proposed a rubber at picquet, and he accepted. Whilst playing

himself, he remarked in Madame de Rouville an ardour for play which surprised him. Never before had this old baroness manifested so ardent a desire to win, nor so lively a pleasure in fingering the gold pieces of the gentleman. During the evening, evil suspicions arose to disturb the happiness of Hippolyte and inspire him with distrust. Did Madame de Rouville live by play, then? Was she not playing, at this moment, to pay off some old debt, or urged by some necessity? Perhaps she had not paid her rent. This old man appeared quite knowing enough not to allow his money to be filched with impunity. What interest attracted this rich man to this poor house? Why had he, formerly so intimate with Adelaïde, given up familiarities acquired and, perhaps, due? These involuntary reflections incited him to watch the old man and the baroness, whose airs of intelligence and certain oblique looks cast on Adelaïde and himself displeased him. "Are they deceiving me?" was for Hippolyte a last idea, horrible and degrading, and in which he believed exactly enough to be tortured by it. He wished to stay until after the departure of the two old men, to confirm his suspicions or to dissipate them. He took out his purse to pay Adelaïde, but, carried away by his bitter thoughts, he put it on the table and fell into a reverie, which did not last long. Then, ashamed of his silence, he rose, replied to a

trifling question of Madame de Rouville, and came to her side in order to be able, whilst chatting, to observe more closely this old countenance. He went away a prey to a thousand uncertainties. After having gone down a few stairs, he came back to get his forgotten purse.

"I left my purse with you," said he to the young girl.

"No," she answered, blushing.

"I thought it was there," replied he, pointing to the card-table.

Ashamed, for Adelaïde's sake and the baroness's, not to see it there, he looked at them with a stupefied air which made them laugh, turned pale, and continued, feeling his waistcoat, "I was mistaken; I dare say I have got it."

In one end of this purse there were fifteen louis, and in the other some small change. The theft was so flagrant, and so impudently denied, that Hippolyte had no more doubt as to the morality of his neighbours. He stopped on the stairs, and got down them with difficulty; his legs trembled, he turned giddy, he perspired, he shivered, and found himself quite unable to walk, struggling with the frightful commotion caused by the overthrow of all his hopes. From this moment he recalled to his memory a crowd of observations, slight in appearance, but which cor-

roborated his hideous suspicions, and which, by proving the reality of this last act, opened his eyes to the character and the life of these two women. Had they waited, then, until the portrait was given to steal the purse? If planned, the robbery seemed far more odious. The painter remembered, for his misfortune, that, for two or three evenings, Adelaïde, whilst appearing to examine with a young girl's curiosity the peculiar make of the worn-out silk netting, had probably ascertained the money contained in the purse whilst making remarks, innocent in appearance, but, no doubt, with the object of watching for the moment when the sum would be large enough to be abstracted.

"The old admiral has excellent reasons, perhaps, for not marrying Adelaïde; and then the baroness has tried to——" At this supposition he stopped short, and did not even finish his thought, which was demolished by a very just reflection. "If the baroness," he thought, "hoped to marry her daughter to me, they would not have robbed me." Then he tried, so as not to have to renounce his illusions and his love, already so deeply rooted, to find some justification in chance. "My purse must have fallen on the ground," he said to himself; "it has caught on my chair. Perhaps I have got it; I am so forgetful." He felt himself all over, with rapid movements, but did

not find the accursed purse. His cruel memory recalled momentarily the fatal truth. He saw distinctly his purse spread on the table; but, doubting the theft no longer, he still made excuses for Adelaïde, saying to himself that we ought not to judge the unfortunate so quickly. No doubt, there was a secret in this action apparently so degrading. He would not admit that this proud and noble countenance was a lie. Nevertheless, this miserable dwelling appeared to him denuded of the poesies of love, which embellishes everything. He saw it soiled and stained, and considered it the representative of an inner life, ignoble, unoccupied, and vicious. Are not our sentiments, so to say, written on the things which surround us?

The next morning, he got up without having slept. The heartache, that serious moral malady, had made enormous progress in him. To lose a dreamt-of happiness, to renounce an entire future, is a pang much more acute than that caused by the ruin of a felicity already experienced, however complete it may have been. Is not hope always better than remembrance? The meditations into which the soul suddenly falls are then like a sea without a shore, on the bosom of which we may float for a moment, but in which our love must drown and perish. And it is a fearful death. Are not our sentiments the most

brilliant part of our life? From this partial death proceed, in certain delicate or powerful organizations, the awful ravages produced by hopes and passions betrayed. Thus it was with the young painter. He went out early in the morning to walk in the cool shades of the Tuileries, absorbed in his thoughts, forgetting everything in the world. There, by chance, he met one of his most intimate friends, an old companion at school and in the studio, with whom he had agreed better than with a brother.

"Well, Hippolyte, what is the matter with you?" said François Suchet, a young sculptor, who had just obtained the grand prize, and was soon to start for Italy.

"I am very unhappy," replied Hippolyte, gravely.

"It is only a love affair that could upset you. Money, glory, consideration—nothing else fails you."

Insensibly, confidences began, and the painter avowed his love. The moment he mentioned the Rue de Suresnes, and a young girl who lived on the fourth floor—

"Halt there!" cried Suchet, gaily. "It is a little girl I come to the Assumption every morning to see, and to whom I am making love. Why, my dear fellow, we all know her. Her mother is a baroness. Do you believe in baronesses lodging on the fourth floor? B-r-r-r! Ah, well, you are a man of the golden

age. We see the old mother here, in the avenue, every day. Why, she has got a face and a style that tells everything. What! you have not guessed what she is from the way she holds her bag?"

The two friends walked about for a long time, and several young men who knew Suchet or Schinner joined them. The adventure of the painter, considered of very little importance, was related to them by the sculptor.

"And he, too," said he, "has seen this little girl!"

There were observations, laughter, and jokes, innocent and stamped with the gaiety familiar to artists, but which made Hippolyte suffer horribly. A certain bashfulness of disposition made him ill at ease on seeing the secret of his heart treated so lightly, his passion torn into tatters; an unknown young girl, whose life appeared so modest, subject to judgments, true or false, given with so much carelessness. He feigned to be moved by a spirit of contradiction; he demanded seriously from each the proofs of his assertions, and the joking recommenced.

"But, my dear fellow, have you seen the baroness's shawl?" said Suchet.

"Have you followed the little one when she trots to the Assumption of a morning?" said Joseph Bridau, a young colour-grinder from the atelier of Gros.

"Ah! the mother possesses, amongst other virtues,

a certain grey dress which I look upon as a type," said Bixiou, the maker of caricatures.

"Listen, Hippolyte," resumed the sculptor. "Come here about four o'clock, and just analyze the walk of the mother and daughter. If you have any doubts after that, well, they will never make anything of you, and you will be capable of marrying the daughter of your porteress."

A prey to the most conflicting sentiments, the painter quitted his friends. Adelaïde and her mother, it seemed to him, ought to be above these accusations, and he felt remorse from the bottom of his heart, for having suspected the purity of this young girl, so beautiful and so simple. He came to his studio, passed by the door of the apartments which contained his Adelaïde, and felt a pang at the heart, in which no man is mistaken. He loved Mademoiselle de Rouville so passionately that, in spite of the robbery of the purse, he adored her still. His love was like that of the Chevalier des Grieux admiring and purifying his mistress even in the cart which takes abandoned women to prison. "Why should not my love render her the purest of all women? Why abandon her to evil and vice, without holding out to her a friendly hand?" This mission pleased him. Love turns everything to its own advantage. Nothing tempts a young man more than to play the part of

good genius to a woman. There is a certain something romantic in the enterprise which suits excitable dispositions. Is it not the most comprehensive devotion in the most graceful and elevated form? Is there not a grandeur in knowing that we love enough to love still when the love of others fades out and dies?

Hippolyte sat down in his studio, looked at his picture without doing anything to it, only seeing the figures through the tears that hung in his eyes, always holding his brush in his hand, advancing towards the canvas as if to soften a tint, and not touching it. Night surprised him in this attitude. Roused from his reverie by the darkness, he went down, met the old admiral on the staircase, gave him a sombre look in bowing to him, and rushed away. He had intended to call on his neighbours, but the sight of the protector of Adelaïde froze his heart and put his resolution to flight. He asked himself, for the hundredth time, what interest could attract this old man of loose manners, with eighty thousand livres a year, to this fourth story, where he lost about forty francs every evening. This interest he thought he could guess. The next and the following days, Hippolyte threw himself into hard work, to try and combat his passion by the rush of ideas and the heat of conception. He succeeded by half. Study consoled him, but without having the power to smother

the memory of so many delightful hours spent with Adelaïde.

One evening, on leaving his studio, he found the door of the apartments of the two ladies ajar. Some one was standing in the embrasure of the window. The position of the door and the staircase did not allow of his passing without seeing Adelaïde. He bowed coldly, giving her a look full of indifference; but, judging the young girl's sufferings by his own, he shuddered internally on thinking of the bitterness this look and this coldness must cast into a loving heart. To crown the sweetest hours that had ever rejoiced two pure souls by a week of disdain, and by the most profound and entire contempt! Frightful conclusion. Perhaps the purse had been found, and perhaps every evening Adelaïde had expected her friend. This idea, so simple and natural, caused fresh remorse to the lover; he asked himself whether the proofs of attachment the young girl had given him, whether the rapturous conversations impregnated with a love which had charmed him, did not deserve at least an inquiry—were not worth a justification. Ashamed of having resisted for a week the wishes of his heart, and feeling almost guilty on account of this combat, he called the same evening on Madame de Rouville. All his suspicions, all his evil thoughts, vanished at the sight of the young girl, pale and fallen away.

"Ah, good Heaven! what is the matter with you?" he said to her, after having saluted the baroness.

Adelaïde answered nothing, but she gave him a look full of melancholy—a sad, dejected look, which gave him pain.

"You have, no doubt, been working hard," said the old lady. "You are altered. We are the cause of your seclusion. That portrait has delayed some pictures of importance to your reputation."

Hippolyte was happy to find so good an excuse for his impoliteness.

"Yes," said he, "I have been very busy, but I have been ill."

At these words, Adelaïde raised her head and looked at her lover; her anxious eyes reproached him no more.

"And you supposed that we were quite indifferent to any good or bad fortune that might happen to you?" said the old lady.

"I was wrong," replied he. "Yet there are troubles which cannot be confided to any one, not even to a friendship less recent than that with which you honour me."

"The sincerity and the strength of friendship cannot be measured by time. I have seen old friends not shed a tear for each other in misfortune," said the baroness, shaking her head.

"But what is the matter with you?" inquired the young man of Adelaïde.

"Oh, nothing," replied the baroness. "Adelaïde has been spending some nights in finishing a piece of lady's work, and would not believe me when I told her that a day more or less was of little consequence."

Hippolyte was not listening. On seeing these two faces, so noble and so pure, he blushed for his suspicions, and attributed the loss of his purse to some unknown accident. This evening was delicious for him, and perhaps also for her. There are some secrets that young hearts comprehend so well! Adelaïde guessed the thoughts of Hippolyte. Without wishing to avow his faults, the painter acknowledged them; he returned to his mistress more loving and more affectionate, endeavouring thus to purchase a tacit pardon. Adelaïde tasted a joy so perfect and so sweet, that it did not seem too dearly bought by all the torture which had so cruelly torn her heart. The veritable harmony of their souls, that understanding full of magic, was nevertheless disturbed by a word from the Baroness de Rouville.

"Shall we have our little game?" said she; "for my old Kergarouët sulks with me."

This phrase aroused all the fears of the young painter, who blushed on looking at the mother of Adelaïde; but he only saw on her face the expression

of an unaffected good nature. No evil design destroyed its charm; there was no treachery in its slyness; its sharpness seemed kindly, and no remorse disturbed its calm. He sat down to the card-table. Adelaïde wished to share in the painter's stakes, pretending that he did not know picquet and wanted a partner. Madame de Rouville and her daughter made signs to each other during the game, which made Hippolyte all the more uneasy because he was winning; but, in the end, the last hand rendered the two lovers the debtors of the baroness. Having to get some change out of his pocket, the painter took his hands off the table, and then he saw before him a purse, which Adelaïde had slipped there without his notice. The poor girl was holding the old one, and, to keep herself in countenance, was looking in it for the money to pay her mother. All Hippolyte's blood rushed so suddenly to his heart that he nearly lost consciousness. The new purse substituted for his, and which contained his fifteen louis, was worked in gold beads. The slides, the tassels, everything attested the good taste of Adelaïde, who, without doubt, had spent her winnings on the ornaments of this charming piece of work.

It was impossible to say with more delicacy that the gift of the painter could only be recompensed by a proof of affection. When Hippolyte, overwhelmed

with happiness, turned his eyes on Adelaïde and the baroness, he saw them trembling with pleasure and rejoicing in this amiable piece of trickery. He felt himself little, mean, and foolish; he would have liked to be able to punish himself, to tear his breast. Tears came into his eyes; he got up and, by an irresistible impulse, took Adelaïde in his arms, pressed her to his heart, snatched a kiss, and then, with the bluntness of an artist, "I ask her of you for my wife," he cried, looking at the baroness.

Adelaïde turned on the painter eyes half angry, and Madame de Rouville was trying to find an answer, when this scene was interrupted by the sound of the bell.

The old vice-admiral appeared, followed by his shadow and Madame Schinner. After having divined the cause of the grief which her son vainly endeavoured to hide from her, the mother of Hippolyte had made inquiries of some of her friends about Adelaïde. Justly alarmed at the calumnies which hung over the young girl unknown to the Count de Kergarouët, whose name was told her by the *portière*, she went to tell them to the vice-admiral, who, in his rage, would have liked, he said, to cut off the scoundrel's ears. Animated by his indignation, the admiral confided to Madame Schinner the secret of his voluntary losses at cards—that the pride of the baroness left him only this ingenious means of assisting her.

When Madame Schinner had saluted Madame de Rouville, the latter looked at the Count de Kergarouët, the Chevalier du Halga (the old lover of the Countess de Kergarouët), Hippolyte, and Adelaïde, and said, with the grace that comes from the heart, "It seems we are a family party to-night."

GAUDISSART II.,

OR THE SELIM SHAWL.

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GAUDISSART II.,

OR THE SELIM SHAWL.

To be able to sell, to be willing to sell, and to sell! The public little suspects how much grandeur Paris owes to these three aspects of the same problem. The brilliance of the shops, as rich as the *salons* of the nobility before 1789; the splendour of the *cafés*, which often eclipses, and very easily, that of the Neo-Versailles; the poem of the window shows demolished every night and built up again every morning; the elegance and grace of the young men in communication with the fair purchasers; the seductive physiognomies and the dresses of the young girls who are to attract the male buyers; and finally, nowadays, the depths, the immense space, and the Babylonian luxury of the galleries in which the shopkeepers monopolize particular trades by combining them—all this is nothing! As yet it is only a ques-

tion of pleasing the most insatiable and the most sated organ which has been developed in man since the days of Roman society, and whose avidity has become unbounded—thanks to the efforts of the most refined civilization. This organ is *the eye of the Parisians!* This eye consumes a hundred thousand francs' worth of fireworks, variegated glass palaces two kilomètres long by sixty feet high, fairy pieces at fourteen theatres every evening, ever-changing panoramas, continual exhibitions of *chefs-d'œuvre,* worlds of grief and universes of joy walking about on the boulevards or wandering in the streets, encyclopedias of rags at the *carnaval,* twenty illustrated works a year, a thousand caricatures, ten thousand vignettes, lithographs, and engravings. This eye burns fifteen thousand francs' worth of gas every evening; in short, to satisfy it, the city of Paris annually expends several millions in fine sites and plantations. And still this is nothing; it is only the material side of the question. Yes, to us, all this is a trifle in comparison with the efforts of skill, the stratagems worthy of Molière, employed by the sixty thousand shopmen and the fifty thousand shop-girls, who fasten on to the purse of the purchasers, like the thousands of little fishes on to the pieces of bread which float on the waters of the Seine.

The stationary Gaudissart is at least equal in

ability, in art, in mockery, and in philosophy, to the illustrious bagman who has become the type of his tribe. Out of his shop and his business, he is like a balloon without gas. He derives his faculties only from the goods around him; like the actor, he is only sublime on the stage. Although the French shopman is relatively better informed than the other shopmen of Europe; although he can at least talk about asphalte, the *bal Mabile*, the polka, literature, illustrated books, railways, politics, the Chambers, and revolution, he is excessively stupid when he leaves his shop-board, his yard measure, and his graces to order; but there, at the edge of the counter, the words on his lips, his eye on the customer, the shawl in his hand, he eclipses the great Talleyrand. He has more wit than Desaugiers, more tact than Cleopatra; he is equal to Monrose multiplied by Molière. At home, Talleyrand would have imposed on Gaudissart; but, in his shop, Gaudissart would have taken in Talleyrand.

Let us explain this paradox by a fact.

Two lovely duchesses were prattling by the side of this illustrious prince. They wanted a bracelet. They were expecting, from the most celebrated jeweller's in Paris, a shopman and some bracelets. A Gaudissart arrives, furnished with three bracelets—three marvels—between which the two women hesi-

tate. To choose there must be a flash of intuition! Do you hesitate? All is said. You are mistaken. Taste never has two inspirations. At last, after ten minutes, the prince is consulted. He sees the two duchesses struggling with the thousand facets of uncertainty between the two most stylish of the jewels—for one of them had been put aside at first sight. The prince does not leave off reading—he does not look at the bracelets; he examines this shopman. "Which would you choose for your sweetheart? he asks him. The young man points out one of the jewels. "In that case, take the other. You will insure the happiness of two women," says the most astute of modern diplomatists. "And you, young man, make your sweetheart happy in my name." The two pretty women smile, and the shopman retires, as much flattered by the present the prince has just made him as by the good opinion he entertains of him.

A lady gets out of her brilliant carriage, stopped in the Rue Vivienne, before one of those sumptuous shops where they sell shawls. She is accompanied by another lady. Women almost always go in couples on this sort of expedition. They all, in like cases, go through ten shops before making up their minds; and, in the intervals between one and the other, they laugh at the little comedy got up for them

by the shopmen. Let us examine which plays his or her part best, the buyer or the seller—which of the two gets the best of it in this little vaudeville.

When we have to paint the greatest achievement of Parisian commerce, the sale, we must condense the subject and produce a type. Now, in this respect, a shawl or a chatelaine of a thousand crowns will cause more emotions than a piece of cambric or a dress of three hundred francs. But, O foreigners of the two worlds! if you happen to read this physiology of the bill to pay, know that this scene is played in all the drapers' shops over a barege at two francs or a printed muslin at four francs a yard.

How should you be on your guard, princesses or commoners, against the good-looking, rosy young man, with downy and peach-coloured cheeks, with truthful eyes, dressed nearly as well as your—your—cousin, and endowed with a voice as soft as the fabric he spreads before you? There are three or four in that style: one with black eyes and decided mien, who says, "There!" with an imperious air; another with blue eyes and timid ways, with soft speech, of whom you say, "Poor boy! he was not born for business;" one, light chestnut, with laughing yellow eyes, pleasing address, and endowed with Southern activity and gaiety; another tawny red,

with a fan-shaped beard, stiff as a Methodist, severe, imposing, with an irresistible necktie, and brief of speech.

These different species of shopmen, which correspond with the principal varieties of women, are the arms of their master—a big fellow, with a broad face, a bald forehead, a ministerial deputy's corporation, sometimes decorated with the Legion of Honour for having maintained the superiority of French trade, presenting an outline of satisfactory rotundity, having a wife, children, a country house, and an account at his bankers. This personage descends into the arena after the manner of a *Deus ex machinâ,* when the plot becomes too complicated and requires a sudden *dénouement.* Thus the women are surrounded with good nature, with youth, with cajoleries, with smiles, with jests, with everything that civilized humanity offers most simple and most deceitful, the whole arranged in shades to suit all tastes.

A word upon the natural effect of optics, architecture, and decoration; a word short, sharp, and terrible; a word which is history written on the spot. The book in which you read this instructive page is sold at No. 76, Rue de Richelieu, in an elegant shop, white and gold, hung with red velvets, which possessed a room on the *entresol* (mezzanine floor) upon which the light came full from the Rue de

Menars, and came as it does to a painter, pure, clear, and always equal. What *flaneur* has not admired the Persian, that Asian king who struts at the angle of the Rue de la Bourse and the Rue de Richelieu, charged to tell *urbi et orbi*, "I reign more quietly here than at Lahore." In five hundred years, this figure at the corner of two streets might, without this immortal analysis, occupy the archeologists, and be the subject of volumes in quarto with engravings, like that of Monsieur Quatremeu on the Olympian Jupiter, in which it was demonstrated that Napoleon had somehow been a Sophi in some Oriental country before being Emperor of the French. Well, this rich warehouse laid siege to this poor little *entresol*; and, by force of bank notes, it got possession of it. The COMÉDIE HUMAINE had to give way to the Comedy of *Cachemires*. The Persian sacrificed some of the diamonds of his crown to obtain the necessary daylight. This ray of sunlight increased the sale cent. per cent., by its influence on the effect of colour. It brings out in relief the seductions of the shawls; it is an irresistible light; it is a golden ray. From this fact, judge of the scenic effect in all the shops in Paris!

Let us return to the young men, to the decorated man of forty received by the King of the French at his table, to the head shopman with red beard

and autocratic air. These veteran Gaudissarts have matched themselves against a thousand caprices a week; they know all the vibrations of the *cachemire* chord in the feminine heart. When a *lorette*, a respectable lady, a young mother of a family, a *lionne*, a duchess, a good housewife, a brazen dancer, an innocent girl, or a too innocent foreigner present themselves, each of them is immediately analyzed by these seven or eight men, who have studied her from the moment she put her hand on the cane handle of the shop door, and who are stationed at the windows, at the counter, at the door, in a corner, in the middle of the shop, apparently contemplating the joys of a festive Sunday. On looking at them you even ask yourself, What can they be thinking about? A woman's purse, her desires, her intentions, her fancies, are more thoroughly hauled over in a moment than a suspected carriage is hauled over at the frontier by the custom-house officers in seven quarters of an hour. These intelligent fellows, serious as a heavy father, have seen everything: the details of the costume, an invisible stain of mud on the boot, an old-fashioned style, a bonnet-string dirty or in bad taste, the cut and making of the dress, the newness of the gloves, the dress cut out by the intelligent scissors of Victorine IV., the jewellery of Froment-Meurice, the fashionable bauble

—in short, everything about a woman which could betray her rank, her fortune, and her character. Tremble! Never is this Sanhedrim of Gaudissarts presided over by the master mistaken. Then the ideas of each one are transmitted from one to the other with telegraphic rapidity, by looks, by nervous twitches, by smiles, by movements of the lips, which, on observing them, you would liken to the sudden lighting up of the grand avenue of the Champs Elysées, when the gas flies from lamp to lamp, just as this idea lights up the eyeballs from shopman to shopman.

And immediately, if it is an Englishwoman, the serious Gaudissart, mysterious and irresistible, advances like a romantic character of Lord Byron's.

If it is a shopkeeper, they send her the oldest of the shopmen. He shows her a hundred shawls in a quarter of an hour; he bewilders her with colours and patterns; he unfolds her as many shawls as a kite describes circles over a rabbit; and, at the end of half an hour, the worthy woman, thoroughly muddled and not knowing which to choose, refers it to the shopman, who puts her between the two horns of this dilemma and the equal attractions of two shawls: "This one, madame, is very becoming—it is apple-green, the fashionable colour; but the fashion changes; whilst this one" (the black or the white, the

sale of which is urgent) "you will never see the end of, and it can be worn with any dress."

This is the A B C of the trade.

"You would never believe how much eloquence is required in this beast of a business," said the first Gaudissart of the establishment, recently, whilst talking to two of his friends, Duronceret and Bixiou, who had come to buy a shawl, leaving the choice to him. "Look here, you are discreet artists; I can talk to you about the tricks of our principal, who is, certainly, the cleverest man I ever saw. I don't say as a manufacturer—Monsieur Fritot is the first—but as a salesman he invented the Selim shawl, *a shawl which is not to be sold,* and which we always sell. We keep in a cedar box, very plain, but lined with satin, a shawl worth five or six hundred francs, one of the shawls sent by Selim to the Emperor Napoleon. This shawl is our imperial guard: we bring it forward when the case is desperate; *it sells and never dies.*"

At this moment, an Englishwoman descended from her hired carriage, and appeared in the perfection of the phlegm peculiar to England and all its productions supposed to be animated. You would have said, the statue of the Commander walking with certain jerks—of an awkwardness manufactured at London in every family with a national particularity.

"The Englishwoman," whispered he in Bixiou's

ear, "is our battle of Waterloo. We have women who slip through our fingers like eels—we catch them again on the stairs; *lorettes* who humbug us—we laugh with them, we get hold of them by credit; undecipherable foreigners who have several shawls taken home for them, and with whom we get on by smothering them with flattery; but the Englishwoman—it is like attacking the bronze of the statue of Louis XIV. These women make a business and a pleasure of bargaining. They actually trot us out."

The romantic shopman had come forward.

"Does madame wish for an Indian shawl or a French one, expensive or——"

"I will see."

"What sum does madame devote?"

"I will see."

In turning round to get the shawls and place them on a dummy, the shopman gave his colleagues a significant look (what a bore!), accompanied by an imperceptible shrug of the shoulders.

"These are our finest qualities in Indian red, in blue, in orange yellow; they are all ten thousand francs. Here are the five thousand and the three thousand ones."

The Englishwoman, with sullen indifference, looked through her eyeglass at everything around

her before looking at the three exhibitions, without giving a sign of approbation or disapprobation.

"Have you any others?" she asked.

"Yes, madame. But perhaps madame has not quite decided to have a shawl?"

"Oh, quite decided."

And the shopman went to fetch some shawls of a lower price; but he spread them out solemnly, like things of which you seem to say, "Attention to these splendours!"

"These are much dearer," said he. "They have never been worn. They are brought to us by couriers, and are bought direct of the manufacturers of Lahore."

"Oh! I understand," said she. "They suit me much better."

The shopman remained serious, notwithstanding his internal irritation, which caught Duronceret and Bixiou. The Englishwoman, still as cool as water-cresses, seemed to rejoice in her phlegm.

"What price?" said she, pointing out a sky-blue shawl, covered with birds stuck in pagodas.

"Seven thousand francs."

She took the shawl, put it on, looked at herself in the glass, and said, returning it, "No, I don't like it."

A good quarter of an hour passed in these fruitless essays.

"We have nothing else, madame," said the shopman, looking at his principal.

"Madame is particular, like all persons of taste," said the head of the establishment, coming forward with those shop graces in which the pretensious and the coaxing are agreeably mingled.

The Englishwoman took her eyeglass and examined the manufacturer from head to foot, without pleasing to comprehend that the man was eligible and dined at the Tuileries.

"I have only a single shawl left, but I never show it to anybody," continued he. "Nobody finds it to their taste. It is very out of the way; and, only this morning, I was thinking of giving it to my wife. We have had it ever since 1805; it comes from the Empress Josephine."

"Let me look at it, sir."

"Go and fetch it," said the master to the shopman; "it is in my room."

"I shall be very glad to see it," replied the Englishwoman.

The reply was quite a triumph, for this splenetic woman had appeared on the point of going away. She made a pretence of looking only at the shawls, whilst she was hypocritically examining the shopmen and the two purchasers, screening her eye behind the frame of her eyeglass.

"It cost sixty thousand francs in Turkey, madame."

"Oh!"

"It is one of the seven shawls sent by Selim, before his catastrophe, to the Emperor Napoleon. The Empress Josephine—a Creole, as miladi knows, and very capricious—exchanged it for one of those brought by the Turkish ambassador, which my predecessor had bought; but I have never been able to get the price for it, for, in France, *our ladies* are not rich enough. It is not like in England. This shawl is worth seven thousand francs, which would certainly represent fourteen or fifteen with compound interest."

[Here occurs an untranslatable *jeu de mots.* The shopkeeper says, "*Intérêts composés*" (compound interest); and the Englishwoman asks, "*Composés de quoi?*"]

"Here it is, madame."

And the master, taking precautions that the exhibitors of the *Grüne-gewoelbe* of Dresden would have admired, opened with a miniature key a square cedar box, the shape and simplicity of which made a great impression on the Englishwoman. From this box, lined with black satin, he took out a shawl worth about fifteen hundred francs, of a golden yellow, with a black pattern, whose brightness

was only surpassed by the absurdity of the Indian design.

"Splendid!" said the Englishwoman. "It is really handsome. This is my ideal of a shawl. It is very magnificent . . ."

The rest was lost in the Madonna attitude she fell into to show off her lack-lustre eyes, which she thought handsome.

"The Emperor Napoleon liked it very much. He wore it."

"Very," she repeated.

She took the shawl, arranged it on her shoulders, and examined herself. The master took back the shawl, came to the light to show it off, pulled it about, and made it glisten; he played on it like Liszt plays on the piano.

"It is very fine, beautiful, sweet!" said the Englishwoman, with the calmest air.

Duronceret, Bixiou, and the shopmen exchanged looks of pleasure which signified "The shawl is sold."

"Well, madame?" asked the shopkeeper, seeing the Englishwoman absorbed in a sort of contemplation infinitely too much prolonged.

"Decidedly," she said, "I prefer a carriage."

The same start animated the silent and attentive shopmen, as if they had received a shock from the electric fluid.

"I have a very handsome one, madame," quietly answered the master. "I had it from a Russian princess, the Princess Narzicoff, who left it with me in payment for goods. If madame would look at it, she would be astonished. It has not been out ten days, and there is not one like it in Paris."

The stupefaction of the shopmen was restrained by their profound admiration.

"I am quite willing," answered she.

"If madame will keep the shawl on," said the master "she will see how it looks in the carriage."

The master went to get his hat and gloves.

"How will it end?" said the head shopman, seeing his master offering his hand to the Englishwoman, and going off with her in the hired *calèche.*

For Duronceret and Bixiou this incident had all the attraction of the wind-up of a novel, besides the special interest attaching to all contests, however insignificant, between England and France. Twenty minutes afterwards, the master returned.

"Go to the Hôtel Lawson; here is the card—Mistress Noswell. Take the bill I am going to give you; there are six thousand francs to receive."

"And how have you managed?" said Duronceret, saluting this king of bill-makers.

"Why, sir, I had reckoned up this eccentric style of woman. She likes to be remarked. When she saw

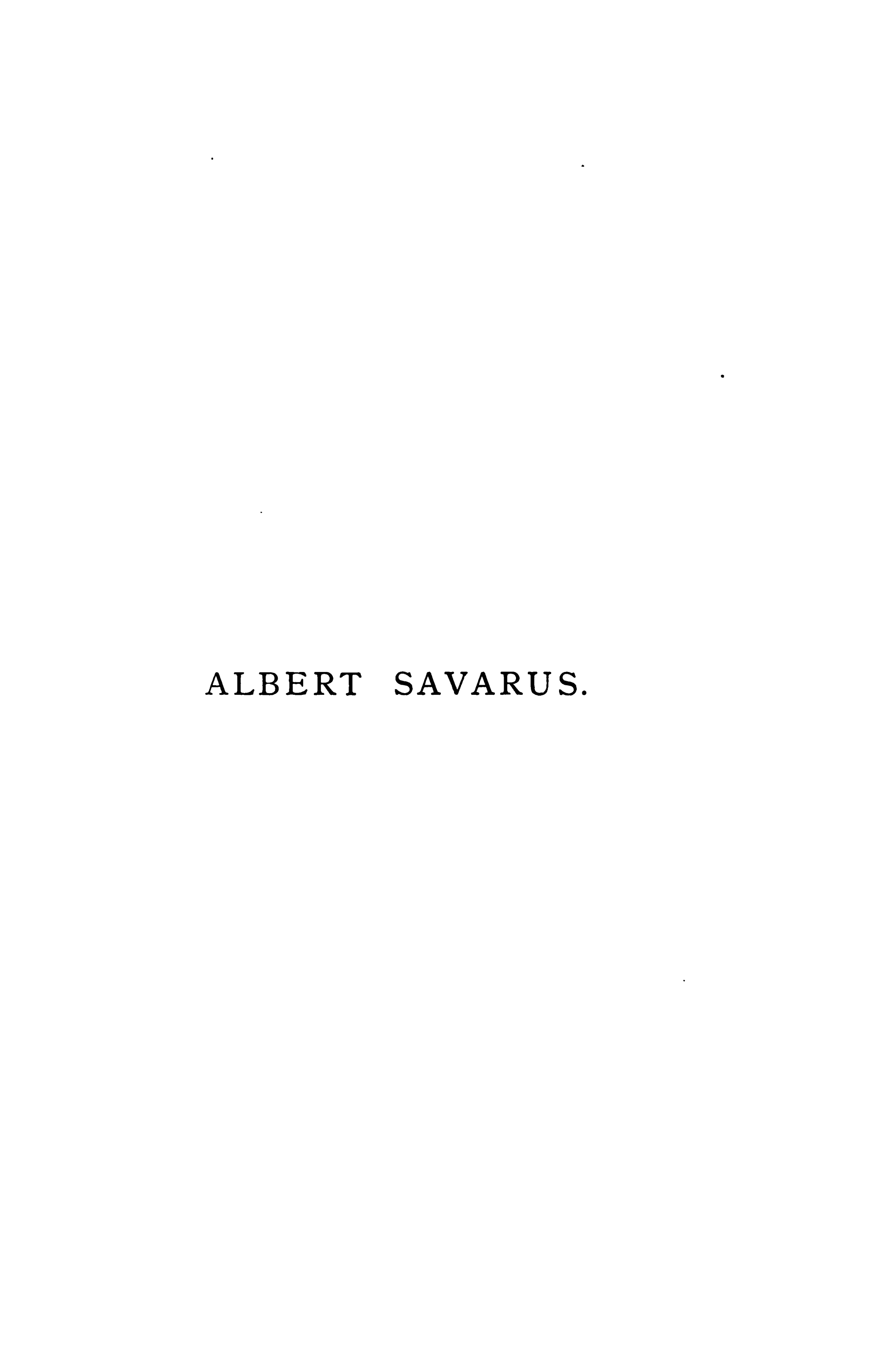
that everybody was looking at her shawl, she said to me, 'Decidedly, keep your carriage, sir; I will keep the shawl.' Whilst Monsieur Bigorneau," said he, pointing to the romantic shopman, "was showing her the shawls, I was examining miladi. She was ogling you to know what opinion you had of her; she was a great deal more taken up with you than with the shawls. The English have a peculiar distaste (for you cannot call it a taste); they don't know what they want, and make up their minds to have a thing they are bargaining for from some accidental circumstance rather than from choice. I recognized one of those women tired of their husbands and their brats, virtuous but discontented, seeking emotions, and always planted like weeping willows."

This is literally what was said by the head of the establishment. Which proves that in a shopkeeper of any other country there is only a shopkeeper, whilst in France, and above all in Paris, there is a man who has been to a royal college, educated, fond either of art, or fishing, or the theatre, or devoured with the desire of becoming the successor of Monsieur Cunin-Gridaine, or a colonel in the National Guard, or a member of the Consul-General of the Seine, or a judge of the Tribunal of Commerce.

"Monsieur Adolphe," said the shopkeeper's wife

to the little fair shopman, "go and order a cedar box at the fancy shop."

"And," said the shopman, whilst reconducting Duronceret and Bixiou, who had chosen a shawl for Madame Schoutz, "we must look amongst our old shawls for the one that is to play the part of the Selim shawl."



ALBERT SAVARUS.

ALBERT SAVARUS.

One of the few *salons* frequented by the Archbishop of Besançon, under the Restoration, was that of Madame the Baroness de Watteville, for whom he had a peculiar affection on account of her religious sentiments. A word about this lady, perhaps the most important feminine personage of Besançon.

Monsieur de Watteville, a descendant of the famous Watteville, the most fortunate and most illustrious of murderers and renegades (his extraordinary adventures are much too historical to be related here)—Monsieur de Watteville of the nineteenth century was as gentle and quiet as his ancestor of the grand age had been fiery and turbulent. After having lived in the Comté * like a wood-louse in the crack of a panel, he had married the heiress of the celebrated family of De Rupt. Mademoiselle de Rupt united estates worth twenty thousand francs a year to the

* A district of France, formerly a province called the Comté, of which Besançon is the chief place.

ten thousand francs a year in real property of the Baron de Watteville. The arms of the Swiss gentleman (the Wattevilles are Swiss) were placed *en abîme* on the ancient escutcheon of the De Rupts. This marriage, decided on ever since 1802, took place in 1815, after the second Restoration. Three years after the birth of a daughter, all the relations of Madame de Watteville were dead and their inheritances fallen in. They then sold the house of Monsieur de Watteville to establish themselves in the Rue de la Préfecture, in the handsome Hôtel de Rupt, whose vast gardens extend to the Rue du Perron. Madame de Watteville, devout as a young girl, became still more a devotee after her marriage. She is one of the queens of the saintly fraternity which imparts to the best society of Besançon a sombre air and prudish manners in harmony with the character of the city.

Monsieur the Baron de Watteville, a spare, thin man of no intellect, appeared worn out, without anybody knowing by what—for he revelled in a gross ignorance—but as his wife was of an ardent, fair complexion, and an angular disposition become proverbial (they still say "As pointed as Madame de Watteville"), some scoffers in the magistracy maintained that the baron had worn himself out against this rock. Rupt evidently comes from *rupes*. Intelligent observers of social nature will not fail to

remark that Rosalie was the only fruit of the union of the De Wattevilles and De Rupts.

Monsieur de Watteville passed his life in an elegant turner's shop; he took to turning! As a supplement to this existence, he indulged in the mania of making collections. To philosophic medical men, given to the study of insanity, this tendency to collect is a first sign of mental alienation, when it is exercised on trifles. The Baron de Watteville amassed the shells and geological fragments of the district of Besançon. People fond of contradicting, particularly the women, said of Monsieur de Watteville, "He has a noble mind! He saw, from the start of his married life, that he would not be able to get the upper hand of his wife, so he threw himself into a mechanical occupation and into good living."

The Hôtel de Rupt was not without a certain splendour worthy of the time of Louis XIV., and recalled the nobility of the two families united in 1815. It shone with an ancient luxury which did not know it was the fashion. The crystal lustres cut in the shape of leaves, the hangings, the damask, the carpets, the gilded furniture—everything was in harmony with the old liveries and the old servants. Although served in tarnished family plate, surrounding a glass epergne ornamented with Saxony china, the fare was exquisite. The wines chosen by Monsieur

de Watteville, who, to fill up his time and introduce a little variety into his existence, had appointed himself his own cellarman, enjoyed a sort of departmental celebrity. The fortune of Madame de Watteville was considerable, for that of her husband, which consisted of the estate of Rouxey, worth about ten thousand francs a year, had not been augmented by any inheritance. It is needless to observe that the very intimate acquaintance of Madame de Watteville with the archbishop had installed at her table the three or four remarkable or intelligent *abbés* of the archbishopric who did not object to good living.

At a dinner of ceremony, given in return for I know not what marriage feast, at the beginning of the month of September, 1834, at the moment when the women were ranged in a circle before the chimney of the *salon*, and the men in groups at the windows, there was heard an exclamation at the sight of Monsieur l'Abbé de Grancey, who was announced.

"Well, how goes the cause?" they cried.

"Won," replied the vicar-general. "The decree of the court, which we despaired of—you know why" (this was an allusion to the composition of the royal Court since 1830; the Legitimists had nearly all resigned)—"the decree is just given in our favour on all points, and reverses the judgment of First Instance."

"Everybody thought you were lost."

"And so we were without me. I told our counsel to go off to Paris; and I was able to take, at the moment of battle, a new counsel, to whom we owe the gain of our cause—an extraordinary man."

"In Besançon?" said Monsieur de Watteville, innocently.

"In Besançon," replied the Abbé de Grancey.

"Ah yes, Savaron!" said a handsome young man, sitting by the baroness, and named De Soulas.

"He sat up five or six nights, he devoured the papers and briefs; he had seven or eight conferences of several hours with me," resumed Monsieur de Grancey, who reappeared at the Hôtel de Rupt for the first time in three weeks. "In short, Monsieur Savaron has just completely beaten the celebrated counsel our adversaries had sent to Paris for. This young man was marvellous, according to the judges. Thus, the chapter is doubly a conqueror; it has conquered in law and also in politics; it has vanquished Liberalism in the person of the defender of our *hôtel de ville.* 'Our adversaries,' said our advocate, 'must not expect to find everywhere a disposition to ruin archbishoprics.' The president was obliged to order silence. All the Bisontines applauded. Thus, the buildings of the old convent

remain the property of the chapter of the cathedral of Besançon. Monsieur Savaron afterwards invited his brother barrister from Paris to dinner, on leaving the court. The latter, on accepting, said, 'All honour to all conquerors,' and congratulated him on his triumph without rancour."

"But where did you discover this advocate?" said Madame de Watteville. "I never heard his name."

"But you can see his windows from here," replied the vicar-general. "Monsieur Savaron lives in the Rue du Perron; the garden of his house has the same party wall as yours."

"He does not belong to the Comté," said Monsieur de Watteville.

"He belongs so little to anywhere, that nobody knows where he comes from," said Madame de Chavoncourt.

"But what is he?" asked Madame de Watteville, taking the arm of Monsieur de Soulas to go into the dining-room. "If he is a stranger, by what chance has he come to settle at Besançon? It is a very singular idea for a barrister."

"Very singular!" repeated young Amédée de Soulas, whose biography becomes necessary to the comprehension of this history.

From time immemorial France and England have

kept up an exchange of frivolities, the more persistent because it escapes the tyranny of the custom-house. The fashion we call English in Paris is called French in London, and *vice versâ*. The enmity of the two peoples ceases on two points, the question of words and that of dress. "God save the King," the national air of England, is a piece of music composed by Lulli for the chorus of "Esther" or "Athalie." The *paniers* brought by an Englishwoman to Paris were invented in London, we know why, by a Frenchwoman, the famous Duchess of Portsmouth. They began by making fun of them to such an extent that the first Englishwoman who appeared in the Tuileries was nearly crushed by the crowd; but they were adopted. This fashion tyrannized over the women of Europe for half a century. At the peace of 1815, they laughed for a whole year at the long waists of the English—all Paris went to see Pothier and Brunet in the "Anglaises pour rire;" but in 1816 and 1817, the waist-bands of the French, which confined their bosoms in 1814, descended by degrees until they rested on their hips. In ten years, England has made us two little linguistic presents. To the *incroyable*, the *merveilleux*, and the *elegant*, those three heirs of the *petits-maîtres*, whose etymology is rather indecent, have succeeded the *dandy*, then the *lion*. The *lion* has not produced a *lionness*. The

lionne is due to the famous song of Alfred de Musset:

> "Avez vous vu dans Barcelone . . .
> C'est ma maîtresse et ma lionne."

There has been a fusion, or, if you will, a confusion, between the two terms and the two dominant ideas. When an absurdity amuses Paris, which devours as many *chefs-d'œuvre* as absurdities, it is difficult for the provinces to do without it. Thus, as soon as the *lion* exhibited in Paris his mane, his beard and his moustache, his waistcoats, and his eye-glass held without the help of the hands, by the contraction of the cheek and the eyebrow, the capitals of some of the departments immediately had their sub-*lions* who protested, by the elegance of their trouser-straps, against the slovenliness of their compatriots.

Thus Besançon rejoiced, in 1834, in a *lion* in the person of Monsieur Amédée Sylvain Jacques de Soulas—written Souleyas during the Spanish occupation. Amédée de Soulas is perhaps the only person in Besançon who is descended from a Spanish family. Spain sent her people into the Comté to look after her affairs, but very few Spaniards settled there. The Soulases remained there on account of their alliance with Cardinal Granvelle. Young Monsieur de Soulas was always talking of leaving Besançon—a dull, bigoted, unintellectual city, a warlike and

garrison city, whose manners and customs, however, and whose physiognomy are worth describing. This avowed intention permitted him to live, as a man uncertain of his future, in three rooms, very slightly furnished, at the end of the Rue Neuve, at the spot where it joins the Rue de la Préfecture.

Young Monsieur de Soulas could not dispense with a tiger. This tiger was the son of one of his farmers, a little, thick-set boy, fourteen years old, named Babylas. The *lion* dressed his tiger very well: a short coat of iron-grey cloth, with a varnished leather belt, breeches of bright blue plush, red waistcoat, varnished top-boots, a round hat with a black band, and yellow buttons with the arms of Soulas. Amédée gave this boy white cotton gloves, his washing, and thirty-six francs a month to keep himself, which appeared monstrous to the work-girls of Besançon. Four hundred and twenty francs to a child of fifteen, without reckoning perquisites! The perquisites consisted of the sale of the old clothes, of a "tip" when Soulas exchanged one of his horses, and the sale of the manure. The two horses, managed with sordid economy, cost, one with the other, eight hundred francs a year. The accounts for things supplied from Paris, such as perfumery, cravats, jewellery, pots of blacking, and clothes, reached twelve hundred francs. If you add together groom or tiger, horses, superfine

get-up, and a rent of six hundred francs, you will get a total of three thousand francs. Now, the father of young Monsieur de Soulas had not left him more than four thousand francs a year, the produce of some rather poor and small farms, which required keeping in repair, and whose repairs imposed an unpleasant uncertainty on their revenue. The *lion* had scarcely three francs a day left for his living, his pocket money, and card money. But, then, he often dined out, and breakfasted with remarkable frugality. When he was absolutely obliged to dine at his own expense, he sent his tiger to the eating-house for two dishes, on which he did not spend more than twenty-five sous. Young Monsieur de Soulas passed for a dissipated fellow who had his follies, whilst the poor devil, to make the two ends of the year meet, had to exert an ingenuity and a talent that would have been the glory of a good housekeeper. They did not yet know, particularly at Besançon, how far six francs' worth of varnish put on to boots or shoes, yellow gloves at fifty sous cleaned in the most profound secrecy to make them last three times, neckties at six francs which last three months, four waistcoats at twenty-five francs, and trousers which fit well over the boot, impose on a capital. How should it be otherwise, since we see, in Paris, the women bestowing a marked attention on fools who visit them and take

precedence of the most remarkable men, by virtue of those frivolous advantages which can be purchased for fifteen louis, including hair-dressing and a fine linen shirt?

If this unfortunate young man appears to you to have become a *lion* at a cheap rate, learn that Amédée de Soulas had been three times to Switzerland by public and private conveyance, twice to Paris, and once from Paris to London. He passed for an accomplished traveller, and could say, "*In England, where I have been,*" etc. The dowagers said to him, "*You, who have been in England,*" etc. He had even penetrated into Lombardy and the shores of the Italian lakes. He read the new works. To sum up, whilst he was cleaning his gloves, the tiger Babylas told visitors, "Master is studying." Accordingly, they had tried to discredit young Amédée de Soulas by the help of the expression, "He is a man of *advanced ideas.*" Amédée possessed the talent of descanting with Bisontine gravity on the commonplace topics of the day, which gave him the credit of being one of the most enlightened members of the nobility. He carried on his person jewellery of the latest fashion, and in his head ideas hall-marked by the press.

In 1834 Amédée was a young man of five and twenty, of middling height, dark, with a strongly developed chest, shoulders to match, well-rounded

thighs, a foot already fat, plump white hands, whiskers all round his face, moustaches which rivalled those of the garrison, a large, good-natured, ruddy face, a flat nose, brown eyes without expression; for the rest, nothing Spanish about him. He was rapidly advancing towards a corpulence fatal to his pretensions. His nails were cultivated, his beard was trimmed, the smallest details of his dress were arranged with English particularity. Accordingly, Amédée de Soulas was considered the handsomest man in Besançon. A hair-dresser, who came to him at a regular hour (another luxury of sixty francs a year), proclaimed him the sovereign arbiter in all matters of taste and elegance. Amédée slept late, dressed, and went out on horseback about mid-day to practise pistol-shooting at one of his farms. He attached the same importance to this occupation as Lord Byron did in his latter days. Then he returned at three o'clock on his horse, to the admiration of the *grisettes* and of everybody who happened to be at their windows. After some pretended studies, which appeared to occupy him until four o'clock, he dressed to go out to dinner, passed the evening in the *salons* of the Bisontine aristocracy, playing whist, and came home to bed at eleven. No existence could possibly be more open, more steady, or more irreproachable, for he went to church punctually on Sundays and *fête*-days.

In order that you may comprehend how exacting was this life, it is necessary to explain Besançon in a few words. No town offers a more deaf and dumb resistance to progress. At Besançon, the officials, the functionaries, the military—in short, everybody sent there by the Government, by Paris, to occupy a post of any sort—are designated in a body by the expressive name of *the Colony.* The Colony is the neutral ground, the only one where, as at church, the noble and the middle-class society of the town can meet. On this ground commence, over a word, a look, or a gesture, those hatreds of house to house between women noble and plebeian, which last until death, and enlarge still more the impassable gulfs which separate the two classes. With the exception of the Clermont Mont-Saint Jeans, the Beauffremonts, the De Sceys, the Gramonts, and a few others, who only inhabit the Comté by their estates, the Bisontine nobility does not date further back than two centuries, the epoch of the conquest by Louis XIV. These people are essentially parliamentary, stiff, stuck-up, grave, positive, and haughty, to a degree with which nothing can compare, not even the Court of Vienna; for the Bisontines in this respect would put the Viennese to shame. Victor Hugo, Nodier, Fourier, the glories of the town, are never mentioned; nobody thinks anything of them. The marriages of the

nobility are arranged from the cradles of the children, so strictly are the most trifling, as well as the most important, matters settled beforehand. Never has a stranger or an intruder crept into one of these houses, and to get colonels or officers of title belonging to the best families of France (when they happened to be in garrison) received into them has required efforts of diplomacy which Prince Talleyrand would have been glad to know, in order to make use of them at a congress. In 1834 Amédée was the only one who wore straps in Besançon. This explains at once the *lionism* of young Monsieur de Soulas. In brief, a little anecdote will make you understand Besançon.

Some time before the day on which this history commences, the préfecture had felt the necessity of getting from Paris an editor for their paper, in order to defend themselves against the little *Gazette*, which the great *Gazette* had laid at Besançon, and against the *Patriote*, which the Republic kept sputtering there. Paris sent a young man ignorant of the Comté, who came out with an article (*premier Besançon*) in the style of the *Charivari*. The leader of the moderate party, a member of the town council, sent for the journalist and said to him—

"Learn, sir, that we are serious—more than serious, tedious. We do not want to be amused, and

we are furious at having laughed. Be as hard to digest as the thickest amplifications of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and you will scarcely be up to the tone of the Bisontines."

The editor took the warning, and talked the most incomprehensible philosophic gargon. He had a perfect success.

If young Monsieur de Soulas did not lose in the estimation of the *salons* of Besançon, it was pure vanity on their part; the aristocracy was glad to have the air of modernizing itself, and to be able to present to the noble Parisians travelling in the Comté a young man who resembled them—almost. All this hidden labour, all this powder thrown into people's eyes, this apparent folly, and this latent prudence had an end, without which the Bisontine *lion* would not have belonged to the province. Amédée wanted to arrive at a favourable marriage by proving, some day, that his farms were not mortgaged, and that he had saved money. He wanted to occupy the attention of the town, to be its handsomest and most elegant man, in order to obtain first the notice, and then the hand, of Mademoiselle Rosalie de Watteville.

In 1830, at the moment when young Monsieur de Soulas began his profession of a dandy, Rosalie was fourteen.

In 1834, then, Mademoiselle de Watteville had attained the age when a young person is easily struck by the peculiarities which attracted to Amédée the attention of the town. There are a great many *lions* who become *lions* by calculation and on speculation. The Wattevilles, with an income of fifty thousand francs a year for the last twelve years, did not spend more than four and twenty thousand a year, although they entertained the best society of Besançon on Mondays and Fridays. They gave a dinner on Monday, and a *soirée* on Friday. To what a sum would not six and twenty thousand francs, annually economized, and invested with the prudence which distinguishes these old families, amount in twelve years? It was pretty generally believed that Madame de Watteville, satisfied with the amount of her landed property, had put her economies into the Three per Cents. in 1830. The fortune of Rosalie would amount then, according to the best informed, to twenty thousand francs a year. For five years, the *lion* had worked like a mole to establish himself in the good graces of the severe baroness, whilst living in a style to flatter the self-love of Mademoiselle de Watteville. The baroness was in the secret of the contrivances by which Amédée managed to keep up his position in Besançon, and esteemed him for them. Soulas had put himself under the wing of the baroness when she

was thirty. He had had the audacity to admire her and make her his idol then; he had now gradually attained the privilege, he alone of all the world, of relating to her the high-spiced anecdotes which nearly all devotees love to hear, authorized as they are by their great virtues to contemplate the abyss without falling into it, and the snares of the devil without being caught in them. Do you understand why this *lion* did not indulge in the slightest intrigue? He crystallized his life, he lived almost in the street, in order to play the part of a sacrificed lover to the baroness, and enable her to indulge the spirit in the sins she denied to the flesh. A man who possesses the privilege of dropping naughty things into the ear of a devotee is always a charming man in her eyes. If this exemplary *lion* had known the human heart better, he might without danger have allowed himself some little intrigues with the *grisettes* of Besançon, who looked upon him as a king; it would probably only have helped on his affairs with the severe and prudish baroness. To Rosalie this Cato appeared extravagant; he professed a life of elegance, he showed her in perspective the brilliant part of a woman of fashion at Paris, to which he would go as a deputy. These knowing manœuvres were crowned with full success. In 1834, the mothers of the forty noble families which composed the choice society of

Besançon quoted young Monsieur de Soulas as the most charming young man of Besançon; nobody dared to set himself up against the cock of the Hôtel de Rupt, and all Besançon regarded him as the future spouse of Rosalie de Watteville. There had already been some words exchanged between the baroness and Amédée, which the pretended incapacity of the baron rendered almost a guarantee.

Mademoiselle Rosalie de Watteville, whom her fortune (which would some day be enormous) invested with considerable importance, brought up within the walls of the Hôtel de Rupt—which her mother rarely quitted, so strongly was she attached to the dear archbishop—had been strictly kept under by an exclusively religious education, and by the despotism of her mother, who managed her severely on principle. Rosalie knew absolutely nothing. Is it knowing anything to have studied geography in Guthrie, sacred history, ancient history, the history of France, and the four rules, the whole passed through the sieve by an old Jesuit? Drawing, music, and dancing were forbidden, as more likely to corrupt than embellish life. The baroness taught her daughter all the stitches possible in tapestry and feminine handiwork: sewing, embroidery, and knitting. At seventeen, Rosalie had read nothing but the *Lettres Édifiantes* and works on heraldry. Never had a newspaper

sullied her sight. She heard mass every morning at the cathedral, to which she was taken by her mother; came home to breakfast, studied, after a little walk in the garden, and received visitors, seated by the baroness, until dinner time; then afterwards, except on Mondays and Fridays, she accompanied Madame de Watteville to the *soirées*, without being able to talk more than was allowed by the maternal regulations.

At eighteen Mademoiselle de Watteville was a young girl, frail, slender, flat, fair, white, and of the greatest insignificance. Her eyes, of a pale blue, were embellished by the play of the eyelids, which, when lowered, produced a shade on the cheek; freckles impaired the effect of her forehead, otherwise well shaped. Her face exactly resembled the saints of Albert Durer and the painters before Perugino—the same full, though slender, shape, the same delicacy saddened by ecstasy, the same severe simplicity. Everything about her, even her attitude, recalled those virgins whose beauty appears in its mystic lustre only to the eye of the attentive connoisseur. She had fine, but red, hands, and the prettiest foot—the foot of an aristocrat. She generally wore simple cotton dresses, but on Sundays and *fêtes* her mother allowed her silk ones. Her bonnets, made at Besançon, rendered her almost ugly; whilst her mother endeavoured to borrow grace, beauty, and

elegance from the milliners of Paris, from whence she procured all the slightest articles of dress, by the care of young Monsieur de Soulas. Rosalie had never worn silk stockings nor boots, but cotton stockings and leather shoes. On gala days she was dressed in a muslin frock, with no head-dress, and had bronzed leather shoes. This education, and the modest demeanour of Rosalie, concealed a character of iron. Physiologists and profound observers of human nature will tell you, to your great astonishment, perhaps, that humorous characters, wit, and genius reappear in families at great intervals, absolutely like what are called hereditary maladies. Thus talent, like the gout, sometimes jumps over two generations. We have an illustrious example of this phenomenon in George Sand, in whom are revived the puissant and inventive genius of Marshal de Saxe, whose natural granddaughter she is. The decisive character, the romantic audacity, of the famous Watteville were renewed in the character of his great-niece, still further aggravated by the tenacity and the family pride of the De Rupts. But these qualities, or these defects, if you will, were as profoundly hidden in this young girl's mind, apparently soft and feeble, as the boiling lava in a mountain before it becomes a volcano. Madame de Watteville alone, perhaps, suspected this legacy of the two races. She behaved

so severely to her Rosalie, that she replied one day to the archbishop, who reproached her with treating her too harshly—

"Leave me to manage her, monseigneur; I know her. She has got more than one Beelzebub in her body."

The baroness watched her daughter all the more because she thought her honour as a mother pledged. In short, she had nothing else to do. Clotilde de Rupt, then thirty-five years old, and almost the widow of a husband who turned egg-cups in all sorts of wood, who set his heart on making rings with six streaks in ironwood, and manufactured snuff-boxes for his friends, coquetted in all innocence and honour with Amédée de Soulas. When this young man was in the house, she sent away and recalled her daughter in turns, and tried to surprise in this young heart a movement of jealousy, in order to have an opportunity of quelling it. She imitated the police in their dealings with the Republicans; but it was in vain. Rosalie did not give way to any sort of insubordination. Then the austere devotee reproached her daughter with her complete insensibility. Rosalie knew her mother well enough to know that, if she had appeared to like young Monsieur de Soulas, she would have drawn down on herself a sharp reproof. So, to all her mother's provocation, she replied by

phrases of the sort improperly called Jesuitical; for the Jesuits were strong and able, and these reticences are the ramparts behind which weakness shelters itself. Then the mother accused her daughter of dissimulation. If, by misfortune, a spark of the true character of the Watteville and De Rupt broke out, the mother armed herself with the respect due from children to their parents to restore Rosalïe to passive obedience. This secret combat took place in the most secret precincts of domestic life, with closed doors.

The vicar-general, the dear Abbé de Grancey, the friend of the late archbishop, however able he might be in his capacity of grand penitentiary of the diocese, could not tell whether this struggle had engendered a hatred between the mother and daughter, whether the mother was jealous beforehand, or whether the courtship of the daughter in the person of the mother by Amédée had not gone beyond the bounds. In his character of friend of the family, he did not confess either the mother or the daughter. Rosalie, a little too much chastised, morally speaking, on account of young Monsieur de Soulas, to use a familiar expression, could not bear him. Accordingly, when he addressed his conversation to her, endeavouring to surprise her heart, she received him pretty coldly. This repugnance, visible only to the eyes of her mother, was a continual subject of reprimand.

"Rosalie, I do not know why you show so much coldness to Amédée. Is it because he is the friend of the family, and pleases *your father* and me?"

"Ah, mamma," answered the poor child one day, "if I treated him well, should I not be still more in the wrong?"

"What is the meaning of that?" exclaimed Madame de Watteville. "What do you mean by such words? Your mother is unjust, perhaps, and would be, in any case, according to you. Never let your mouth utter such an answer to your mother!" etc.

This quarrel lasted three hours and three-quarters. Rosalie remarked it. The mother became pale with rage, and sent Rosalie to her room, where Rosalie studied the meaning of this scene without being able to discover it—she was so innocent! Thus, young Monsieur de Soulas, whom all the town of Besançon thought very near the end towards which he was straining, cravats spread, by force of pots of varnish—the end which made him use up so much black pomade for his moustaches, so many fine waistcoats, horse-shoes, and stays (for he wore a leather waistcoat, the *lion's* stays),—Amédée was further from it than the first comer, although he had the worthy and noble Abbé de Grancey in his favour. Besides, Rosalie did not yet know, at the moment

when this history begins, that the young Count Amédée de Soulas was destined for her.

"Madame," said Monsieur de Soulas, addressing the baroness, giving the soup, which was a little too hot, time to cool, and affecting to render his narrative quasi-romantic, "one fine morning the mail deposited at the Hôtel National a Parisian who, after having looked about for apartments, decided on the first floor of the house of Mademoiselle Galard, Rue du Perron. Then the *stranger* went straight to the *mairie* to deposit a declaration of domicile, real and political. Afterwards he had himself inscribed in the list of counsel practising in the court, presenting certificates quite in order; and he left with all his new *confrères*, with all the ministerial officers, with all the judges of the court, and all the members of the tribunal, a card on which is inscribed, '*Albert Savaron.*'"

"The name of Savaron is celebrated," said Mademoiselle de Watteville, very strong in heraldry. "The Savarons de Savarus are one of the oldest, the noblest, and the richest families in Belgium."

"He is a Frenchman and a troubadour," resumed Amédée de Soulas. "If he wants to take the arms of Savaron de Savarus, it must be with a bar. There is only a demoiselle Savarus in Belgium, a rich, marriageable heiress."

"The bar is indeed a sign of bastardy; but the bastard of a Count of Savarus is noble," replied Rosalie.

"That will do, mademoiselle," said the baroness.

"You wanted her to know heraldry," said Monsieur de Watteville, "and she knows it well."

"Pray go on, Monsieur de Soulas."

"You can conceive that in a town where everything is classed, defined, known, placed, reckoned up, and numbered, as at Besançon, Albert Savaron was received by our barristers without difficulty. Every one contented himself with saying, 'Here's a poor devil who does not know Besançon. Who the devil can have advised him to come here? What does he mean to do? To send his card to the magistrates instead of calling himself! What a blunder!' Accordingly, three days afterwards, no more Savaron. He has taken the late Monsieur Galard's old *valet de chambre*, Jerome, who can do a little cooking, for his servant. People have forgotten Albert Savaron all the more readily because nobody has seen or met him since."

"Does he not go to Mass, then?" said Madame de Chavoncourt.

"He goes on Sundays to St. Pierre, but to the first Mass at eight o'clock. He gets up every night between one and two o'clock, works until

eight, then he breakfasts, and afterwards works again. He walks in the garden, and goes round it fifty or sixty times; then he goes in, dines, and goes to bed between six and seven."

"How do you know all that?" said Madame de Chavoncourt to Monsieur de Soulas.

"In the first place, madame, I live in the Rue Neuve, at the corner of the Rue du Perron; I look on to the house in which this mysterious personage lodges; and then there are mutual confabulations between my tiger and Jerome."

"You talk to Babylas, then?"

"What would you have me do when I am out riding?"

"Well, how was it you chose a stranger for your counsel?" said the baroness, thus turning the conversation, to the vicar-general.

"The first president did this advocate the turn of appointing him to defend officially a half-imbecile peasant accused of forgery. Monsieur Savaron got the poor man acquitted, by proving his innocence and showing that he had been the tool of the real culprits. Not only was his theory triumphant, but it necessitated the arrest of two of the witnesses, who were found guilty and condemned. His pleadings struck the court and the jury. One of them, a merchant, the next day confided to Monsieur Savaron a difficult

case, which he won. In the situation in which we were placed by the impossibility of Monsieur Berryer's coming to Besançon, Monsieur de Garcenault advised us to have this Monsieur Albert Savaron, and predicted our success. As soon as I had seen him and heard him, I had faith in him; and I was not deceived."

"Is there anything extraordinary about him, then?" inquired Madame de Chavoncourt.

"Certainly, madame," answered the vicar-general.

"Well, then, tell us all about it," said Madame de Watteville.

"The first time I saw him," said the Abbé de Grancey, "he received me in the room next to the ante-chamber (good Monsieur Galard's old *salon*), which he has had painted in old oak, and which I found entirely covered with law-books, contained in book-cases also painted like old wood. The painting and the books are the only luxuries in this apartment, for the furniture consists of a bureau of old carved wood, six old tapestry armchairs, carmelite coloured curtains with green borders to the windows, and a green carpet on the floor. The stove of the ante-chamber also warms this library. Whilst waiting there for him, I did not figure to myself our advocate with a youthful mien. This singular frame

is really in harmony with the picture; for when Monsieur Savaron came, he wore a black merino dressing-gown tied with a girdle of red cord, red slippers, a red flannel waistcoat, and a red skull-cap.

"The livery of the devil!" exclaimed Madame de Watteville.

"Yes," said the *abbé*, "but a superb head: black hair, already mingled with white—hair like St. Peter and St. Paul have in our pictures, in thick and glossy curls as stiff as horse-hair; a neck as white and round as a woman's; a magnificent forehead, divided by the strong furrow which great projects, great ideas, and deep meditations trace on the brow of great men; an olive complexion veined with red marks; a square nose, eyes of fire, and hollow cheeks marked with two long lines full of sufferings; a mouth with a sardonic smile, and a small chin, sharp and too short; crow's-feet on the temples; sunken eyes rolling in their orbits like two globes of fire: but, in spite of all these indications of violent passions, an air of calm and profound resignation, a voice of penetrating sweetness, and which surprised me in court by its flexibility—the true orator's voice, now pure and measured, now insinuating, and thundering when necessary, next adapting itself to sarcasm, and becoming then cutting. Monsieur Albert Savaron is

of middle height, neither stout nor thin. Finally, he has a bishop's hand. The second time I went to see him, he received me in his room, which is next to the library, and smiled at my astonishment on seeing a shabby wash-stand, an old carpet, a school-boy's bedstead, and calico curtains to the windows. He came out of his cabinet, into which nobody ever penetrates, Jerome told me, who never enters it, and contented himself with knocking at the door. Monsieur Savaron himself locked the door before me. The third time he was breakfasting in his library, in the most frugal style; but this time, as he had spent the night in examining our papers, as I was with our lawyer, as we were to spend a long time together, and dear Monsieur Girardet is verbose, I was able to study this stranger. Certainly, he is no ordinary man. There is more than one secret behind these features at once terrible and gentle, patient and impatient, full and hollow. I found that he stooped slightly, like all men who have something heavy to carry."

"Why has this eloquent man left Paris? With what intentions has he come to Besançon? Has nobody told him how little chance of success there is for strangers? They will make use of him, but the Bisontines will not let him make use of them. Why, when he had come, did he take so little trouble that

it required the caprice of the first president to bring him into notice?" said the handsome Madame de Chavoncourt.

"After having closely studied this 'noble head,'" resumed the Abbè de Grancey, giving his interrupter a sly look, which left her to suppose that he did not tell all he knew, "and particularly after having heard his reply this morning to one of the eagles of the Paris bar, I think that this man will produce a great sensation some day."

"What is he to us? Your cause is gained and you have paid him," said Madame de Watteville, observing her daughter, who, ever since the vicar-general had been speaking, had seemed to hang on to his lips.

The conversation took another turn, and no more was said about Albert Savaron.

The portrait sketched by the most able of the vicars-general of the diocese had all the attraction of romance for Rosalie, because it really contained a romance. For the first time in her life, she encountered the exceptional and the marvellous, longed for by all youthful imaginations, and irresistibly attractive to the lively curiosity of Rosalie's age. What an ideal being was this Albert, sombre, suffering, eloquent, and studious, compared by Mademoiselle de Watteville to this great chubby-

cheeked count, bursting with health, playing the gallant, talking about elegance in the face of the splendour of the old Counts de Rupt! Amédée only brought her quarrels and scoldings; besides, she knew him only too well, and this Albert Savaron offered many a riddle to guess at.

"Albert Savaron de Savarus," she repeated to herself. And then to see him, to catch a glimpse of him! It was the desire of a young girl until then without desires. She revolved in her heart, in her imagination, and in her head, the minutest expressions of the Abbé de Grancey—for every word had struck home. "A fine forehead?" she said to herself, looking at the forehead of every man sitting at the table. "I don't see a single fine one. Monsieur de Soulas's is too prominent. Monsieur de Grancey's is fine; but he is seventy and has no hair—you can't tell where his forehead finishes."

"What is the matter, Rosalie? You are not eating."

"I am not hungry, mamma," said she. "A bishop's hands?" she continued to herself. "I cannot remember our handsome archbishop's, although he confirmed me." At length, in the midst of her wanderings to and fro in the labyrinth of her memory, she recollected, shining through the trees of the neighbouring gardens, a lighted window which she had seen from

her bed when she woke by chance in the night. "It was his light, then," she said to herself, "I shall be able to see him! I shall see him."

"Monsieur de Grancey, is the chapter suit quite finished?" said Rosalie, quite unconnectedly, to the vicar-general during a moment of silence.

Madame de Watteville rapidly exchanged looks with the vicar-general.

"And how can that concern you, my dear child?" said she to Rosalie, with a feigned gentleness that rendered her daughter circumspect for the rest of her days.

"They can appeal, but our adversaries will think twice about that," answered the *abbé*.

"I should never have believed that Rosalie could be thinking about a lawsuit all dinner time," said Madame de Watteville.

"Nor I either," said Rosalie, with a laughable air of abstraction. "But Monsieur de Grancey was so absorbed in it that I became interested."

They rose from table, and the company returned to the *salon*. For the whole of the evening, Rosalie listened to hear whether they would talk about Albert Savaron; but beyond the congratulations addressed by each new-comer to the *abbé* on the gain of the cause, and with which no one mingled the praises of the counsel, he was not mentioned.

Mademoiselle de Watteville awaited the night with impatience; she had promised herself to get up between two and three in the morning, to look at the windows of Albert's study. When this hour was come, she felt almost a pleasure in contemplating the gleam thrown by the advocate's candles through the almost leafless trees. By the aid of the excellent sight a young girl always possesses, and which curiosity seems to extend, she saw Albert writing. She thought she could distinguish the colour of the furniture, which seemed to be red. The chimney sent up over the roof a thick column of smoke.

"Whilst all the world sleeps, he watches—like God!" she said to herself.

The education of girls comprises problems so grave, for the future of a nation depends on its mothers, that for a long while the University of France has undertaken the task of taking no notice of them. Here is one of these problems: Ought we to enlighten young girls? Ought we to restrict their understanding? The religious system is, of course, restrictive. If you enlighten them, you make demons of them prematurely; if you prevent them from thinking, you arrive at the sudden explosion so well painted in the character of Agnes by Molière, and you put this pent-up intelligence, so fresh and so perspicacious, rapid and consistent as a savage, at

the mercy of an accident—a fatal crisis brought about in the case of Mademoiselle de Watteville by the imprudent sketch indulged in at table by one of the most prudent *abbés* of the prudent chapter of Besançon.

The next morning, whilst dressing, Mademoiselle de Watteville necessarily saw Albert Savaron walking in the garden adjoining that of the Hôtel de Rupt.

"What would have become of me," thought she, "if he had lived anywhere else? Here I can at least see him. What is he thinking about?"

After having seen at a distance this extraordinary man, the only one whose physiognomy stood out vigorously from the mass of Bisontine faces hitherto noticed, Rosalie jumped rapidly to the idea of penetrating into his home life, of learning the reason of so much mystery, of hearing this eloquent voice, and obtaining a glance from those splendid eyes. She wished to do all this—but how?

The whole day long, she stitched away at her embroidery with the obtuse attention of a young girl who seems, like Agnes, to be thinking about nothing, but who is reflecting on everything so carefully that her stratagems are infallible. From this profound meditation, there resulted in Rosalie a desire to go to confession. The next morning, after Mass, she had a little conference at St. Pierre with the Abbé

Giroud, and wheedled him so well that the confession was appointed for Sunday morning, at half-past seven, before the eight o'clock Mass. She told a dozen lies to be able to be in the church, just once, at the time the barrister came to hear mass. Finally, she was taken with an excessive affection for her father; she went to see him in his workshop, and asked him a thousand questions about the art of turning, in order to get to advise her father to turn something large—some columns. After having got her father on to spiral columns, one of the difficulties of the turner's art, she advised him to take advantage of a large heap of stones, which happened to be in the middle of the garden, to have a grotto built, on which he could place a little temple in the style of a Belvidere, for which his spiral columns could be made use of, and would shine in the eyes of all his friends.

In the midst of the joy this enterprise caused this poor man without an occupation, Rosalie said, embracing him, "Mind you don't tell mamma who you got the idea from; she would scold me."

"You need not fear," replied Monsieur de Watteville, who groaned under the oppression of the terrible daughter of the De Rupts quite as much as his daughter.

And so Rosalie attained the certainty of soon

seeing erected a charming observatory, from which the eye could plunge into the cabinet of the barrister. And there are men for whom young girls perform similar feats of diplomacy, and who, for the most part, like Albert Savaron, know nothing about them.

The Sunday, so impatiently awaited, arrived, and the toilette of Rosalie was performed with a care which drew a smile from Mariette, the maid of Madame and Mademoiselle de Watteville.

"This is the first time I have seen mademoiselle so particular," said Mariette.

"You make me think," said Rosalie, giving Mariette a look which planted poppies on the waiting-maid's cheeks, "that there are days on which you also are more particular than on others."

On leaving the portico, in crossing the courtyard, in passing through the gateway, in walking through the street, Rosalie's heart beat as if with the presentiment of a great event. She had not known until then what it was to walk in the streets. For a moment she had believed her mother would read her projects on her brow, and forbid her going to confession. She felt new blood in her feet; she raised them as if she were walking on fire! Of course, she had made an appointment for a quarter-past eight with her confessor, and told her mother eight, in order to be able to wait about a quarter of an hour for Albert.

She got to the church before Mass, and, after saying a short prayer, she went to see whether the Abbé Giroud was in his confessional, simply to be able to look about, and managed to place herself where she could see Albert the moment he entered the church.

A man must be atrociously ugly not to appear handsome in the disposition to which curiosity had brought Mademoiselle de Watteville. Now, Albert Savaron, already very remarkable, made all the more impression on Rosalie that his conduct, his demeanour, everything, even to his dress, had that indefinable something which can only be explained by the word *mystery*. He entered. The church, until then sombre, appeared to Rosalie as if illuminated. The young girl was charmed by the slow and almost solemn gait of the people who carry a world on their shoulders, and whose profound gaze and gestures agree in expressing a desolating or a dominating idea. Rosalie understood then the words of the vicar-general to their full extent. Yes, these yellowish-brown eyes, shot with threads of gold, veiled an ardour which betrayed itself by sudden jets. Rosalie, with an imprudence which Mariette remarked, placed herself in the path of the advocate, so as to exchange a glance with him; and this courted glance changed her blood, for her blood seethed and boiled as if its heat had been doubled. As soon as Albert had taken

his seat, Mademoiselle de Watteville had quickly chosen her place, so as to see him perfectly during all the time the Abbé Giroud left her. When Mariette said, "There is Monsieur Giroud," it seemed to Rosalie that this time had not been more than a few minutes. When she came out of the confessional, the Mass was finished; Albert had left the church.

"The vicar-general is right," thought she: "*he* suffers! Why has this eagle, for he has the eyes of an eagle, swooped down upon Besançon! Oh, I must know everything; but how?"

Under the fire of this new desire, Rosalie put in the stitches of her tapestry work with admirable nicety, and these were her meditations beneath an air of candour which simulated simplicity well enough to deceive Madame de Watteville.

Since the Sunday when Mademoiselle de Watteville had received this glance, or, if you will, this "baptism of fire"—Napoleon's magnificent expression, which may be applied to love—she urged on the affair of the Belvedere hotly.

"Mamma," said she, when once there were two columns turned, "my father has got a singular idea in his head. He is turning columns for a Belvedere, which he intends to have erected by making use of the heap of stones which is in the middle of the

garden. Do you approve of it? It seems to me that——"

"I approve of everything your father does," replied Madame de Watteville sharply, "and it is the duty of a wife to submit to her husband, even if she does not approve of his ideas. Why should I oppose a thing, which is indifferent in itself, from the moment it amuses Monsieur de Watteville?"

"But from there we shall see into Monsieur de Soulas's house, and Monsieur de Soulas will see us when we are there. Perhaps people will talk——"

"Do you aspire to manage your parents, Rosalie, and to know more than they about life and propriety?"

"I say no more, mamma. And, besides, my father says the grotto will make a room where we can be cool and have our coffee."

"Your father has had excellent ideas," replied Madame de Watteville, who wanted to go and see the columns.

She gave her approbation to the baron's project, and pointed out, for the erection of the building, a place at the end of the garden, where you could not be seen by Monsieur de Soulas, but could see into Monsieur Albert Savaron's admirably well. A builder was sent for, who undertook to make a grotto, with a path of three feet wide leading to its summit, and

periwinkles, iris, viburnum, ivy, honeysuckle, and ivy grape growing in the rockwork. The baroness conceived the idea of having the interior of the grotto decorated with rustic woodwork, then all the fashion for flower-stands, and putting up a looking-glass at the end, with a covered divan and a chequered bark table. Monsieur de Soulas proposed to have the floor made of asphalte. Rosalie thought of having a rustic wood chandelier suspended from the roof.

"The Wattevilles are having something charming made in their garden," they said in Besançon.

"They are rich. They can well spend a thousand crowns on a fancy."

"A thousand crowns!" exclaimed Madame de Chavoncourt.

"Yes, a thousand crowns," said young Monsieur de Soulas. "They have got a man from Paris to rusticate the interior; but it will be very pretty. Monsieur de Watteville himself is making the chandelier; he is carving the wood."

"They say Berquet is going to build a cellar," said an *abbé*.

"No," replied young Monsieur de Soulas. "He is laying the foundation of the work in cement, so that there may be no dampness."

"You know the least thing that goes on in the house," said Madame de Chavoncourt angrily, looking

at one of her great girls, ready to be married a year ago.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, who experienced a feeling of pride in thinking of the success of her Belvedere, recognized in herself an eminent superiority to all that surrounded her. Nobody had imagined that a young girl, considered dull and silly, had simply wanted to see a little more closely into the cabinet of the advocate Savaron.

The startling speech of Albert Savaron for the chapter of the cathedral was all the more promptly forgotten that it aroused the envy of the bar. Besides, faithful to his retirement, Savaron did not show himself anywhere. Having no touters and seeing nobody, he increased the chances of oblivion, already pretty abundant for a stranger in a town like Besançon. However, he spoke three times in the Tribunal of Commerce, in three complicated cases which would have to go to the court. He thus got as clients four of the largest merchants of the town, who recognized in him so much sense, and what the provinces call good judgment, that they gave him their business. The day that the house of Watteville inaugurated their Belvedere, Savaron also erected his monument. Thanks to the secret relations which he had established with the high commerce of Besançon, he founded a fortnightly review, called the *Revue de*

l'Est, by means of forty shares of five hundred francs each, placed in the hands of his first ten clients, whom he impressed with the necessity of promoting the destiny of Besançon, the town which ought to concentrate the traffic between Mulhouse and Lyon, the capital point between the Rhine and the Rhône.

To compete with Strasbourg, ought not Besançon to be a centre of enlightenment as well as a centre of commerce? The elevated questions relating to the interests of the East could only be discussed in a *Review*. What a triumph to snatch from Strasbourg and Dijon their literary influence and contend with Parisian centralization! These considerations, put forward by Albert, were repeated by the ten merchants, who took to themselves the credit of them.

The barrister Savaron did not commit the blunder of using his own name. He left the financial direction to his first client, Monsieur Boucher, related through his wife to one of the largest publishers of important ecclesiastical works; but he reserved to himself the editorship, with a share, as the founder, in the profits. Commerce made an appeal to Dôle, to Dijon, to Salins, to Neufchâtel, the Jura, Bourg, Nantua, Lons-le-Saulnier. They invited assistance from the intelligence and the efforts of all studious men in the three provinces of Bugey, Bresse, and the Comté. Thanks to the relations of commerce and confraternity, a

hundred and fifty subscriptions were taken up, and in consideration of the cheapness. The *Review* cost eight francs a quarter. To avoid wounding provincial self-love, the barrister had the good sense to make the literary direction of this *Review* the object of the desires of the eldest son of Monsieur Boucher, a young man of two and twenty, very eager for fame, to whom the snares and troubles of literary management were entirely unknown. Albert kept the upper hand in secret, and made Alfred his lieutenant. Alfred was the only person in Besançon with whom the king of the bar became familiar. Alfred came to confer with Albert of a morning in the garden on the contents of the number. It is needless to say that the first number contained a meditation by Alfred, which was approved of by Savaron. In his conversation with Alfred, Albert allowed great ideas to escape him, and the subjects of articles of which young Boucher availed himself; so that the merchant's son thought he was taking advantage of the great man! Albert was a man of genius, a profound politician, to Alfred. The merchants, enchanted with the success of the *Review*, only had to pay up three-tenths of their shares. Two hundred subscriptions more, and the *Review* would pay five per cent. dividend to its shareholders, the editing not being paid for. The editing was beyond price.

At the third number, the *Review* had obtained the exchange with all the papers in France, which Albert read at home. This third number contained a tale signed A. S., and attributed to the famous advocate. Notwithstanding the slight attention the high society of Besançon accorded to the *Review,* which was accused of Liberalism, this novel, the first hatched in the Comté, was discussed at Madame de Chavoncourt's in the middle of the winter.

"Father," said Rosalie, "there is a *Review* published in Besançon. You ought to subscribe to it. And keep it in your room, for mamma would not let me read it; but you will lend it to me."

Eager to obey his dear Rosalie, who for five months had given him so many proofs of filial affection, Monsieur de Watteville went himself to pay a year's subscription to the *Revue de l'Est,* and lent the four numbers which had already appeared to his daughter. During the night Rosalie was able to devour this tale, the first she had ever read in her life. But, then, she had only begun to live for two months! Accordingly, the effect produced on her by this work must not be judged by ordinary data. Without prejudging the more or less of merit in this composition, due to a Parisian who brought into the province the style—the brilliance, if you will—of the new school of literature, it could not help being a *chef-d'œuvre* to a young girl

devoting her virgin intelligence and her pure heart to a first work of this nature. Besides, from what she had heard of it, Rosalie had conceived by intuition an idea which singularly heightened the value of this novel. She hoped to find in it the sentiments, and perhaps something of the life, of Albert. From the first pages this opinion of hers acquired so much consistency that, after having finished this fragment, she felt certain she did not deceive herself.

Here, then, is this narrative, in which, according to the critics of the Chavoncourt circle, Albert had imitated certain modern writers who, for want of invention, relate their own joys and their own griefs, or the mysterious events of their existence.

LOVE'S AMBITION.

"In 1823, two young men, who had arranged to make the tour of Switzerland, started from Lucerne one fine morning in July, in a boat rowed by three men. They were going to Fluelen, proposing to stop at all the celebrated spots on the Lake of the Four Cantons.

"The landscapes which border the water from Lucerne to Fluelen present all the combinations that the most exacting imagination can demand from mountains and rivers, from lakes and rocks, from streams and verdure, from trees and torrents. You

have, by turns, austere solitudes and graceful promenades, smiling and coquettish plains, forests placed like plumes on the perpendicular granite, cool and solitary bays which gradually disclose themselves, valleys whose treasures appear embellished by a dreamy distance.

"In passing before the charming little town of Gersau, one of the two friends made a prolonged observation of a wooden house, which seemed to have been recently built, surrounded by a paling, situated on a promontory, and almost bathed by the water. As the boat passed before it, a woman's head appeared from the back of the room situated on the top floor of this house, to observe the effect of the boat on the lake. One of the young men caught the glance very indifferently thrown by the unknown.

"'Let us stop here,' said he to his friend. 'We were going to make Lucerne our head-quarters for exploring Switzerland. You will not object, Léopold, to my changing my mind and staying here in charge of the baggage? You will then be able to do just as you like. As for me, my voyage is finished. Boatmen, put back and land us at this village; we will breakfast there. I will go and fetch all our luggage from Lucerne; and you will know, before leaving here, which house I am lodging in, so as to be able to find me on your return.'

"'Here, or at Lucerne,' said Léopold; 'it does not matter enough for me to prevent your obeying a caprice.'

"These two young men were two friends in the true sense of the word. They were the same age, had been to the same school, and, after having finished the study of the law, they were employing the vacation for the classic tour of Switzerland. In accordance with the paternal will, Léopold was destined to the profession of a notary in Paris. His upright mind, his gentleness, the tranquillity of his character, and his intellect, guaranteed his docility. Léopold saw himself a notary at Paris; his life was spread out before him like one of those high-roads which traverse the plains of France. He embraced it to its fullest extent with a resignation full of philosophy.

"The character of his companion, whom we will call Rodolphe, offered a contrast to his, whose antagonism had, no doubt, had the effect of drawing closer the ties which united them. Rodolphe was the natural son of a great nobleman, who was surprised by a premature death without having been able to take measures to provide for a woman tenderly beloved, and for Rodolphe. Thus ruined by a stroke of fate, the mother of Rodolphe had recourse to an heroic expedient. She sold all that she possessed through the munificence of the father of her child, made up a sum of a hundred and odd thousand

francs, invested it in an annuity on her own life at a high rate, and procured herself in this way an income of about fifteen thousand francs, ma king resolution to devote it all to the education of her son, in order to endow him with the personal advantages most likely to insure his fortune, and to lay by a capital for him, by dint of economy, by the time he had attained his majority. It was bold; it was relying on her own life; but without this boldness it would, no doubt, have been impossible for this good mother to live and properly educate her child—her only hope, her future, and the sole source of her joys. The issue of one of the most charming Parisians and a man remarkable amongst the aristocracy of Brabant, the fruit of an equal and mutual passion, Rodolphe was afflicted with an excessive sensibility. From his infancy he had manifested the greatest ardour in everything. In him, desire became a superior force and the mainspring of the whole being, the stimulant of the imagination, the cause of his actions. In spite of the efforts of an intelligent mother, who was alarmed when she perceived such a predisposition, Rodolphe desired as a poet imagines, as a *savant* calculates, as a painter sketches, as a musician composes melodies. Tender as his mother, he rushed with unheard-of violence and imagination towards the object desired; he devoured time. Whilst

dreaming of the accomplishment of his projects, he always passed over the means of execution. 'When my son has children,' said the mother, 'he will want them full grown at once.' This noble ardour, properly directed, enabled Rodolphe to make a brilliant scholar, and to become what the English call a perfect gentleman. His mother was proud of him, whilst always dreading some catastrophe if ever a passion took possession of his heart, at once so tender and so sensitive, so violent and so good. Therefore, this prudent woman had encouraged the friendship which bound Léopold to Rodolphe and Rodolphe to Léopold, seeing in the cool and devoted notary a guardian, a confidant, who might replace her to a certain point with Rodolphe, if she should unhappily be taken from him. Still handsome at forty-three, the mother of Rodolphe had inspired Léopold with the most lively affection. This circumstance rendered the young men still more intimate.

"So Léopold, who knew Rodolphe well, was not surprised to see him stopping at a village and giving up the projected excursion to Saint Gothard, for the sake of a glance cast from the top of a house. Whilst their breakfast was being prepared at the Swan Inn, the two friends strolled through the village, and arrived at the part nearest to the charming new house, where, whilst looking about and chatting with

the inhabitants, Rodolphe discovered a family of small tradespeople disposed to take him as a boarder, according to the general custom in Switzerland. They offered him a room with a view of the lake and the mountains, and from which you could catch the magnificent view of one of those prodigious windings which recommend the Lake of the Four Cantons to the admiration of tourists. This house was separated, by an open space and a small harbour, from the new house in which Rodolphe had caught a glimpse of the face of his fair unknown. For a hundred francs a month, Rodolphe was supplied with all the necessaries of life. But, in consideration of the expenses to which the Stopfers would be put, they required the payment of three months in advance. You have only got to rub a Swiss, and the usurer appears.

"After breakfast Rodolphe installed himself on the spot, by putting into his room all the things he had brought for his excursion to St. Gothard, and looked down on the departure of Léopold, who, in the spirit of order, was going to perform the excursion on Rodolphe's account and his own. When Rodolphe, seated on a rock fallen on the shore, could no longer see Léopold's boat, he examined, but from below, the new house, hoping to perceive the unknown. Alas! he went in again without the house having shown a sign of life. At the dinner offered him by Monsieur

and Madame Stopfer, retired coopers, he questioned them about the neighbourhood, and in the end learnt all he wanted to know about the unknown, thanks to the chattering of his hosts, who emptied the scandal bag without much pressing.

"The unknown was called Fanny Lovelace. This name, which is pronounced *Loveless,* belongs to several old English families; but Richardson has created one whose celebrity eclipses all the others. Miss Lovelace had come to reside on the lake for her father's health, the doctors having ordered him the air of the canton of Lucerne. These two English people, who had arrived with no other servant but a little girl of fourteen, very much attached to Miss Fanny—a little dumb girl who waited on her very cleverly—had made arrangements, before the last winter, with Monsieur and Madame Bergmann, formerly head gardeners to his Excellency Count Borromeo at Isola Bella and Isola Madre, on the Lago Maggiore.

"These Swiss, worth about a thousand crowns a year, let the upper story of their house to the Lovelaces at two hundred francs a year for three years. Old Lovelace, an old man of ninety, very infirm, and too poor to afford certain expenses, seldom went out. His daughter, to support him, translated English books, and, they said, wrote books herself. Thus, the Lovelaces did not venture either to hire boats to go

on the lake, or horses, or guides to explore the neighbourhood. A poverty which imposed such privations excited the compassion of the Swiss, all the more that they lost an opportunity of profit. The cook of the house provided for the three English at the rate of a hundred francs a month, everything included. But it was believed in Gersau that the former gardeners, despite their pretensions to gentility, made use of the name of their cook to realize the profits of this agreement. The Bergmanns had constructed admirable gardens and a magnificent hot-house around their habitation. The flowers, the fruits, and the botanic rareties of this habitation had determined the young *miss* to choose it on her passage through Gersau. They put down at nineteen the age of Miss Fanny, who, being the old man's last child, would naturally be idolized by him. Only two months ago, she had procured a piano on hire which came from Lucerne, for she appeared music mad.

"'She is fond of flowers and music,' thought Rodolphe, 'and she is unmarried? What good fortune!'

"The next day, Rodolphe sent to ask permission to visit the hot-houses and gardens, which were beginning to enjoy a certain celebrity. This permission was not granted immediately. These retired gardeners asked, for a wonder, to see Rodolphe's passport, and

he sent it immediately. The passport was not returned until the next day, by the cook, who communicated to him that her master would be pleased to show him his establishment.

"Rodolphe did not enter the Bergmanns' without a certain shock, experienced only by people of strong emotions, and who display in a moment as much passion as some men expend in their whole life. Dressed with care to please the old gardeners of the Borromean isles—for he saw in them the guardians of his treasure—he went through the gardens, looking from time to time at the house, but with prudence. The two old proprietors manifested a very visible mistrust. But his attention was soon excited by the little English dumb girl, in whom his sagacity, though still young, recognized a daughter of Africa, or at least a Sicilian. This young girl had the golden tint of an Havannah cigar, eyes of fire, Armenian eyelids, eyelashes of an anti-Britannic length, hair more than black, and, under this almost olive skin, nerves of remarkable strength and febrile vivacity. She cast on Rodolphe searching looks of incredible boldness, and followed his slightest movements.

"'To whom does this little Moor belong?' said he to the respectable Madame Bergmann.

"'To the English people,' answered Monsieur Bergmann.

"'She certainly was not born in England!'

"'Perhaps they have brought her from India,' replied Madame Bergmann.

"'I have been told that young Miss Lovelace is fond of music. I should be delighted if, during my stay on the lake, to which I am condemned by the doctor's orders, she would allow me to practise with her.'

"'They do not see and do not wish to see anybody,' said the old gardener.

"Rodolphe bit his lips, and went away without having been invited to enter the house, nor taken to that part of the garden situated between the house front and the edge of the promontory. On this side of the house, above the first story, there was a wooden gallery, covered by the roof, which had an excessive projection, like the roof of a châlet, and went all round the four sides of the building, in the Swiss fashion. Rodolphe had greatly praised this elegant construction, and extolled the view from this gallery; but it was all in vain. When he had taken leave of the Bergmanns, he felt himself a fool, like every man of wit and imagination disappointed by the failure of a plan on whose success he had reckoned.

"In the evening he naturally went on the lake in a boat. Coasting the promontory, he went as far as Brunnen and Schwitz, and returned at nightfall.

From a distance he perceived the window open and strongly lighted. He could hear the sound of the piano and the accents of a delicious voice. He stopped the boat to abandon himself to the charm of listening to an Italian air divinely sung. When the song had ceased, Rodolphe landed, and dismissed the boat and the two boatmen. At the risk of wetting his feet, he went and seated himself under the bank of granite worn away by the waters and crowned by a strong hedge of thorny acacias, along which an alley of young lime trees stretched into the Bergmanns' garden. At the end of an hour he heard talking and walking above his head, but the words which reached his ear were all Italian, and pronounced by two young female voices. He took advantage of the moment when the two interlocutrices were at one end to reach the other without noise. After half an hour of efforts, he attained the end of the avenue, and, without being seen or heard, succeeded in taking a position from which he could see the two women without being seen by them when they came towards him. What was the astonishment of Rodolphe on recognizing in one of the two women the little dumb girl. She was talking to Miss Lovelace in Italian. It was eleven at night. The stillness on the lake and around the habitation was so profound that the two women might well believe them-

selves in safety: in all Gersau, only their own eyes would be open. Rodolphe thought the dumbness of the young girl must be a necessary imposition. From the way in which they spoke Italian, Rodolphe guessed that it was the mother tongue of the two, and he concluded that the English disguise must be a stratagem.

"'They are Italian refugees,' said he—'exiles—who, no doubt, are in fear of the Austrian or Sardinian police. The young girl waits till night to be able to walk about and converse in security.'

"Thereupon he threw himself into the hedge, and crawled like a serpent to find a passage between two acacia roots. At the risk of leaving his coat behind him, or seriously hurting his back, he got through the hedge, whilst the pretended Miss Fanny and her pretended dumb girl were at the other end of the avenue; and then, when they had got to within twenty paces of him without seeing him—for he was in the shadow of the hedge, then strongly lighted up by the moon—he suddenly rose up.

"'Fear nothing,' said he, in French, to the Italian; 'I am no spy. You are refugees. I have guessed it. I myself am a Frenchman, whom a single glance from you has fixed at Gersau.'

"Rodolphe, stung by the pain of some steel instrument piercing his side, fell to the ground.

"'*Nel lago con pietra,*' * said the terrible mute.

"'Ah! Gina,' exclaimed the Italian.

"'She has missed me,' said Rodolphe, withdrawing from the wound a stiletto which had struck against a rib; 'but a little higher, and it would have gone through my heart. I was wrong, Francesca,' said he, remembering the name little Gina had several times pronounced. 'I am not angry with her. Do not scold her; the pleasure of speaking to you is well worth a stiletto-cut; only show me my way. I must return to the Stopfers' house. Be at ease, I will say nothing.'

"Francesca, having recovered from her astonishment, assisted Rodolphe to raise himself, and said some words to Gina, whose eyes filled with tears. The two girls forced Rodolphe to sit down on a bench and take off his coat, waistcoat, and cravat. Gina opened his shirt and violently sucked the wound. Francesca, who had left them, returned with a large piece of sticking-plaster, which she applied to the wound.

"'You will be able to get as far as your house now,' said she.

"Each of them took hold of an arm, and Rodolphe was conducted to a little gate, the key of which happened to be in the pocket of Francesca's apron.

* "Into the lake with a stone."

"'Does Gina speak French?' said Rodolphe to Francesca.

"'No; but do not excite yourself,' said Francesca, with a little air of impatience.

"'Let me see you,' replied Rodolphe with emotion, 'for, perhaps, it will be a long while before I can come——'

"He leant on one of the gate-posts and gazed at the fair Italian, who allowed herself to be looked at for an instant in the deepest silence and the loveliest night that had ever shone on this lake, the king of all Swiss lakes. Francesca was, indeed, the classic Italian, such as the imagination desires, represents, or dreams, if you will, all Italians. What struck Rodolphe at once was the elegance and grace of her figure, whose vigour was displayed, despite its apparent frailty, in its elasticity. An amber pallor spread over the face betrayed a sudden interest, which, however, did not efface the voluptuousness of two limpid eyes of velvet blackness. Two hands, the loveliest that ever a Greek sculptor had attached to the polished arm of a statue, held Rodolphe by the arm, and their whiteness was contrasted with the blackness of his coat. The imprudent Frenchman could only just perceive the elongated, oval shape of the face, whose sorrowful and slightly opened mouth disclosed brilliant teeth between two full lips

fresh and ruddy. The beauty of the outlines of this face guaranteed to Francesca the durability of its splendour; but what struck Rodolphe most was the adorable unconstraint, the Italian frankness of this girl, who gave herself up entirely to her companion.

"Francesca spoke to Gina, who gave her arm to Rodolphe as far as the Stopfers' house, and fled like a swallow when she had rung the bell.

"'These patriots do not strike with light hands,' said Rodolphe to himself, feeling the pain of his wound when he was alone in bed. '*Nel lago!* Gina would have thrown me into the lake with a stone round my neck!'

"In the morning, he sent to Lucerne for the best surgeon; and when he came, enjoined on him the most profound secrecy, giving him to understand that honour required it. Léopold returned from his excursion the day his friend left his bed. Rodolphe made him up a story, and got him to go to Lucerne for their luggage and letters. Léopold brought back the most fatal, the most terrible news. Rodolphe's mother was dead. Whilst the two friends were going from Bâle to Lucerne the fatal letter, written by Léopold's father, had arrived there the day of their departure for Fluelen. In spite of the precautions taken by Léopold, Rodolphe was seized with a nervous fever. As soon as the future notary saw his friend

out of danger, he left for France, provided with a power of attorney. Rodolphe was thus enabled to remain at Gersau, the only place in the world where his grief could be calmed. The situation of the young Frenchman, his despair, and the circumstances which rendered this loss more terrible for him than for any other, were known, and drew upon him the compassion and interest of all Gersau. Every morning the sham mute came to see the Frenchman, in order to be able to report to her mistress.

"When Rodolphe was able to go out, he went to the Bergmanns', to thank Miss Fanny Lovelace and her father for the interest they had shown in his affliction and his illness. For the first time since his establishment with the Bergmanns, the old Italian allowed a stranger to penetrate into his apartments, where Rodolphe was received with a cordiality due to his misfortunes and his character of a Frenchman, which precluded all suspicion. Francesca appeared so lovely in the full light during the first evening, that she cast a ray of light on this desponding heart. Her smiles strewed over his mourning the roses of hope. She sang, not gay airs, but grave and sublime melodies appropriate to the state of Rodolphe's heart, and he remarked this touching consideration. About eight o'clock, the old man left the two young people alone, without any appearance of distrust, and

retired to his own room. When Francesca was tired of singing, she took Rodolphe to the exterior gallery, from which the sublime view of the lake was visible, and made a sign to him to sit down by her side on a rustic wood seat.

"'Would it be impertinent to ask your age, *cara* Francesca?' said Rodolphe.

"'Nineteen,' she answered.

"'If anything in the world could lessen my grief,' continued he, 'it would be the hope of obtaining you from your father, whatever may be the state of your fortune. Lovely as you are, you seem to me richer than the daughter of a prince, and I tremble in avowing the sentiments with which you have inspired me; but they are profound—they are eternal.'

"'*Zitto*,' said Francesca, putting one of the fingers of her right hand on her lips. 'Do not go any further. I am not free; I have been married three years.'

"A profound silence reigned for some instants between them. When the Italian, alarmed at the attitude of Rodolphe, drew nearer to him, she found he had fainted away.

"'*Povero!*' she said to herself, 'and I thought he was cold!'

"She went to get her salts, and restored Rodolphe by making him inhale them.

"'Married!' said Rodolphe, looking at Francesca. His tears fell in abundance.

"'Child,' said she, 'there is hope. My husband is——'

"'Eighty?' said Rodolphe.

"'No,' she replied, smiling; 'sixty-five. He put on the mask of age to deceive the police.'

"'Dear one,' said Rodolph, 'a few more emotions like this, and I must die. Only after twenty years of acquaintance will you know the strength and power of my heart, and the nature of its aspirations after happiness. This plant does not shoot up with more eagerness to blossom in the rays of the sun,' said he, pointing to a Virginian jessamine which covered the balustrade, 'than I have become attached for the last month to you. I love you with an unequalled love. This love will be the secret spring of my life, and perhaps I shall die of it.'

"'Oh, Frenchman! Frenchman!' said she, commenting his exclamation with a little grimace of incredulity.

"'Must I not wait for you, and receive you from the hands of time?' continued he with gravity. 'But know this: if you are sincere in the words which have escaped you, I will wait for you faithfully, without allowing any other sentiment to spring up in my heart.'

"She looked at him slyly.

"'Nothing,' said he, 'not even a fancy. I have got my fortune to make; it must be a splendid one, for your sake. Nature had created you a princess——'

"At this word Francesca could not restrain a faint smile, which gave a most charming expression to her countenance, a something artful, which the great Leonardo has so well depicted in his 'Joconde.' This smile made Rodolphe pause.

"'Yes,' resumed he, 'you must suffer from the privations to which exile has reduced you. Ah! if you would render me the happiest of men, and sanctify my love, you would have me as a friend. Have I not a right to be your friend? My poor mother has left me her savings of sixty thousand francs; accept half of them.'

"Francesca looked at him steadily. This piercing glance went to the bottom of Rodolphe's soul.

"'We are not in want of anything; my work provides our luxuries,' replied she, in a grave voice.

"'Can I allow Francesca to work?' cried he. 'Some day you will return to your country, and you will recover all you have left behind you.' Again the young Italian looked at Rodolphe. 'And you will repay me what you have deigned to borrow of me,' added he, with a look full of delicacy.

"'Let us quit this subject of conversation,' said

she, with an incomparable nobility of gesture, of look, and of attitude. 'Make a brilliant fortune; be one of the remarkable men of your country; I desire it. Glory is a flying bridge which may serve to cross an abyss. Be ambitious—you must. I believe you have noble and powerful abilities, but employ them rather for the good of humanity than to obtain me; you will be greater in my eyes.'

"During this conversation, which lasted two hours, Rodolph discovered in Francesca the enthusiasm for liberal ideas and the worship of liberty which had produced the triple revolution of Naples, Piedmont, and Spain. On leaving, he was conducted to the gate by Gina, the sham mute. At eleven o'clock nobody was about in the village; no indiscretion was to be feared. Rodolphe drew Gina into a corner, and asked her softly, in bad Italian—

"'Who are your masters, my girl? Tell me, and I will give you this bright new piece of gold.'

"'Sir,' replied the girl, taking the coin, 'master is the famous bookseller, Lamporani of Milan, one of the chiefs of the revolution—the conspirator Austria would most like to have in the Spielberg.'

"'The wife of a bookseller? Ah! so much the better,' thought he; 'we are on a level. And to what family does she belong?' continued he, aloud, "for she has the air of a queen.'

" 'All the Italian women are like that,' answered Gina, proudly. 'Her father's name is Colonna.'

"Emboldened by the humble condition of Francesca, Rodolphe had an awning put to his boat and some cushions in the stern. When this alteration was effected, Rodolphe came and proposed to Francesca an excursion on the lake. The Italian accepted, no doubt to keep up her character of a young miss in the eyes of the village; but she took Gina.

"The slightest actions of Francesca Colonna betrayed a superior education and the highest social rank. From the manner in which the Italian seated herself at the end of the boat, Rodolphe felt to some extent separated from her, and his premeditated familiarities dropped before the expression of the true pride of nobility. By a look, Francesca created herself a princess, with all the privileges she would have enjoyed in the Middle Ages. She seemed to have guessed the secret thoughts of this vassal who had the audacity to constitute himself her protector. Already, in the furniture of the *salon* in which Francesca had received him, in her dress, and in the most trifling articles she made use of, Rodolphe had recognized the indications of a lofty nature and a high fortune. All these observations recurred at once to his memory, and he became pensive after having been, so to speak, repulsed by the dignity

of Francesca. Gina, her scarcely adolescent confidante, seemed to wear a mocking expression whilst looking aside or stealthily at Rodolphe. This visible discordance between the condition and the manners of the Italian was a new enigma to Rodolphe, who suspected some fresh trick, like the sham dumbness of Gina.

"'Where would you like to go, *Signora Lamporani?*' said he.

"'To Lucerne,' answered Francesca, in French.

"'Good!' thought Rodolphe. 'She is not surprised at hearing me mention her name. She had, no doubt, anticipated my question to Gina, the cunning one! What have I done to offend you?' said he at length, coming to seat himself by her, and seeking by a gesture a hand which Francesca withdrew. 'You are cold and ceremonious—what we should call, in conversation, *cutting*.'

"'It is true,' replied she, smiling; 'I am wrong. It is not right; it is vulgar. You would say in French it is not artistic. It is better to explain one's self than to keep up hostile or cold feelings towards a friend; and you have already proved your friendship. Perhaps I have gone too far with you. You must have taken me for a very common person.'

"Rodolphe made repeated signs of denial.

"'Yes,' said this bookseller's wife, continuing

without taking any notice of the pantomime, which, however, she saw well enough; 'I have perceived it, and, naturally, I have drawn back. Well, I will put an end to it all by a few words of profound truth. Be well assured, Rodolphe; I feel in myself the strength to stifle a sentiment which would not be in harmony with the ideas or the prescience I have of real love. I can love as we know how to love in Italy; but I know my duty. No intoxication will make me forget it. Married without my own consent to this poor old man, I might avail myself of the liberty he leaves me with so much generosity; but three years of marriage are equivalent to an acceptance of conjugal faith, and the most violent passion would not make me express, even involuntarily, a desire to be free. Emilio knows my character. He knows that, except my heart, which belongs to me and which I can dispose of, I would not allow my hand to be touched. That is why I have just refused it to you. I must be loved, awaited with fidelity, nobility, and ardour, whilst according nothing but an infinite tenderness, whose expression must not exceed the limits of the heart—the privileged ground. All these things well understood—oh!' continued she, with a girlish gesture, 'then I will be coquettish, laughing, and playful as a child who does not know the danger of familiarity.'

"This declaration, perfectly frank and clear, was made in a tone, and with an accent, and accompanied by looks which stamped it with the most profound truth.

"'A Princess Colonna could not have spoken better,' said Rodolphe, with a smile.

"'Is that,' said she, with a haughty air, 'a reproach on the lowness of my birth? Does your love require a coat-of-arms? In Milan the greatest names, Sforza, Canova Visconti, Trivalzio, Ursini, are written up over the shops; there are Archintos apothecaries; but, believe that, in spite of my condition as a shopkeeper, I have the feelings of a duchess.'

"'A reproach? No, madame; I intended it for a compliment.'

"'By comparison?' said she, archly.

"'Ah! believe me,' resumed he, 'and torment me no longer. If my words do not properly express my feelings, my love is absolute, and comprises infinite obedience and respect.'

"She inclined her head as if satisfied, and said, 'You accept the treaty, then?'

"'Yes,' said he. 'I comprehend that, in a rich and powerful feminine organization, the faculty of loving cannot be lost, and that you would restrain it from delicacy. Ah, Francesca, a mutual passion, at

my age and with a mistress so sublime, so regally lovely as you, is the accomplishment of all my hopes. To love you as you desire to be loved, is it not a safeguard for a young man against all base follies? Is it not throwing his energies into a noble passion, of which hereafter he may be proud, and which will leave him only fair memories? If you knew with what colours, with what poesy you have just clothed the mountains of Pilatus and the Rigi, and this magnificent basin——'

"'I wish to know it,' said she, with an Italian simplicity which is always backed by a little slyness.

"'Well, then, this hour will cast its radiance over my whole life, like a diamond on the brow of a queen.'

"As her only answer, Francesca placed her hand in that of Rodolphe.

"'Oh, dearest, ever dearest, say you have never loved!'

"'Never!'

"'And you permit me to love you nobly, awaiting all from Heaven?' he asked.

"She gently lowered her head. Two large tears rolled down Rodolphe's cheeks.

"'Well, what ails you?' said she, dropping her imperial character.

"'I have no longer a mother to tell how happy

I am. She has quitted the earth without seeing what would have soothed her last moments.'

"'What?' said she.

"'Her love replaced by an equal love.'

"'*Povero mio!*' exclaimed the Italian, with emotion. 'Believe me,' she resumed, after a pause, 'it is a very delightful thing, and a very great element of fidelity, for a woman to know that she is everything on earth to the man she loves; to see him alone, without family, with nothing in his heart but his love; in short, to have him all to herself.'

"When two lovers understand each other so well, the heart experiences a delicious quietude, a sublime tranquillity. Certainty is the base required by human sentiments, for it is never wanting to religious sentiment: man is always certain of being requited by God. Love only believes itself in safety through this likeness to Divine love; and you must have fully experienced them to comprehend the delights of this moment, always unique in a life. It returns no more, alas! than the emotions of youth. To believe in a woman; to make her your religion on earth, the spring of your life, the secret luminary of your least thoughts—is it not to be born a second time? A young man then mingles with his love some of that he feels for his mother. Rodolphe and Francesca for some time kept profound silence, answering each

other in soft looks full of thought. They sympathized with each other in the midst of one of the finest spectacles of nature, whose richness, explained by that of their own hearts, enabled them to engrave on their memories the most fugitive impressions of this unique hour. There had not been the slightest appearance of coquetry in the conduct of Francesca. Everything was noble, grand, and without reserve. This grandeur forcibly struck Rodolphe, who recognized in it the difference which distinguishes the Italian from the French woman. The waters, the earth, the heavens, the woman, all was grandiose and placid, even their love, in the midst of this picture, vast in its extent, rich in its details, and in which the sharpness of the snowy peaks, their rigid forms clearly marked upon the azure, recalled to Rodolphe the conditions to which his happiness was to be confined: a rich country surrounded by snow.

"This soft intoxication of the soul was to be disturbed. A boat was coming from Lucerne. Gina, who had been looking attentively at it for some time, made a sign of joy, remaining faithful to her character of a mute. The boat came near, and when at last Francesca was able to see the faces in it, 'Tito!' she cried, perceiving a young man. She got up and remained standing, at the risk of being drowned. 'Tito, Tito!' she cried, waving her handkerchief.

"Tito ordered his boatmen to row, and the two boats went on in the same direction. The Italian and Tito talked with so much vivacity, in a dialect so unknown to a man who scarcely knew book Italian and had never been in Italy, that Rodolphe could neither understand nor guess at any part of this conversation. The beauty of Tito, the familiarity of Francesca, the joyous air of Gina, all displeased him. Besides, a man is not in love if he does not feel annoyed at seeing himself left for another, whoever it may be. Tito smartly threw a little leather bag, no doubt full of gold, to Gina, and then a packet of letters to Francesca, who began to read them, making a sign of adieu to Tito.

"'Turn back immediately to Gersau,' said she to the boatmen; 'I must not leave my poor Emilio to pine ten minutes more than I can help.'

"'What has happened to you?' asked Rodolphe, when he saw the Italian finishing her last letter.

"'*La libertà!*' cried she, with the enthusiasm of an artist.

"'*È denaro!*' answered like an echo Gina, who was able to speak at last.

"'Yes,' resumed Francesca, 'no more misery! It is eleven months now that I have had to work, and I was beginning to get tired of it. Decidedly I am not a literary character.'

"'What is this Tito?' said Rodolphe.

"'The secretary of state of the financial department of the poor business of Colonna, otherwise called the son of our *ragjonato*. Poor fellow! he could not get to us by the Saint Gothard, nor by Mont Cenis, nor by the Simplon; he came by sea, by Marseille. He had to cross all through France. In short, in three weeks we shall be at Geneva and living at our ease. Come, Rodolphe,' said she, seeing the sadness spread over the face of the Parisian, 'is not the Lake of Geneva as good as the Lake of the Four Cantons?'

"'Permit me to bestow a regret on this delicious house of the Bergmanns,' said Rodolphe, pointing to the promontory.

"'You must come and dine with us, to multiply your souvenirs, *povero mio*,' said she. 'It is a *fête* to-day. We are no longer in danger; my mother tells me that in a year, perhaps, we shall be amnestied. *Oh, la cara patria!*'

"These three words set Gina crying. 'Another winter here and I should have been dead!' she said.

"'Poor little child of Sicily,' said Francesca, placing her hand on Gina's head with a gesture and an affection which made Rodolphe long to be so caressed, although it was without love.

"The boat came ashore; Rodolphe leapt on to the

sand, held out his hand to the Italian, accompanied her to the gate of the Bergmanns' house, and went home to dress, so as to get back the sooner.

"Finding the bookseller and his wife sitting in the outer gallery, Rodolphe with difficulty repressed a start of surprise at the sight of the prodigious change the good news had worked in the man of ninety. He saw before him a man of about sixty, perfectly well preserved; a spare Italian, straight as an I, his hair still black, though scanty, and disclosing a white scalp, fiery eyes, white and perfect teeth, the face of a Cæsar, and a diplomatic mouth, with a half-sardonic smile—the nearly always false smile under which a well-bred man conceals his true sentiments.

"'Here is my husband in his natural shape,' said Francesca, gravely.

"'It is quite a new acquaintance,' replied Rodolphe at a nonplus.

"'Quite,' said the bookseller. 'I have acted on the stage, and I can play the old man perfectly. Ah! I used to play at Paris, in the time of the Empire, with Bourienne, Madame Murat, Madame d'Abrantes, *è tutti quanti.* Everything one has taken the trouble to learn in one's youth, even the most frivolous things, may turn out useful. If my wife had not received a masculine education, which is a contradiction in Italy, I should have had to turn wood-cutter

for a living here. *Povera* Francesca! who could have told me that some day she would support me?'

"Listening to this worthy bookseller, so easy, so affable, and so lively, Rodolphe suspected some mystification, and maintained the watchful silence of a man who has been duped.

"'*Che avete, signor?*' Francesca archly asked him. 'Does our happiness distress you?'

"'Your husband is a young man,' he whispered in her ear.

"She burst into a fit of laughter, so frank and so catching that Rodolphe was all the more dumbfounded.

"'He is only sixty-five, at your service,' said she; 'but still, I assure you, that is something reassuring.'

"'I do not like to hear you joking about a love so sacred as that whose conditions you have fixed yourself.'

"'*Zitto!*' said she, stamping her foot, and looking whether her husband was listening to them. 'Never disturb the peace of this man who is dear to me, as open as a child, and with whom I do as I like. He is under my protection,' she added. 'If you knew with what nobility he risked his life and his fortune, because I was a Liberal! For he does not share my political opinions. Is that loving, Mister Frenchman?

But they are like that in their family. The younger brother of Emilio was deceived by the woman he loved, for a charming young man. He ran his sword through his heart, and ten minutes previously he said to his valet, "I could easily kill my rival, but that would give too much pain to *la diva*."'

"This combination of nobility and jesting, of grandeur and childishness, made Francesca at this moment the most attractive creature in the world. The dinner, as well as the evening, was stamped with a gaiety justified by the deliverance of the two refugees, but which grieved Rodolphe.

"'Can she be a trifler?' he said to himself on returning to the Stopfers' house. 'She sympathized with my grief, and I—I cannot espouse her joy.' He blamed himself, and justified this young girl-wife. 'She is without the slightest hypocrisy, and gives way to her impressions,' he said to himself, 'and I would have her like a Parisian!'

The next and the following days—for three weeks, in fact—Rodolphe passed all his time at the Bergmanns' house, observing Francesca without having intended to observe her. Admiration, in certain characters, is not unaccompanied by a sort of penetration. The young Frenchman recognized in Francesca an imprudent young girl, the true woman's nature still untamed, struggling at some moments with her love,



and at other moments giving way to it. The old man behaved to her as a father to his child, and Francesca showed him a deeply felt gratitude which revealed an instinctive nobility. This situation and this woman presented to Rodolphe an impenetrable enigma, whose solution more and more strongly attracted him.

"These last days were full of secret *fêtes*, mingled with melancholy—of ruptures and quarrels more charming than the hours when Rodolphe and Francesca were perfectly agreed. In short, he was more and more captivated by the charm of this unreasoning affection always consistent with itself, by this love jealous of a shadow—already!

"'You are very fond of luxury,' said he, one evening, to Francesca, who had manifested a desire to leave Gersau, where many things were wanting.

"'I!' said she. 'I like luxury as I like art—as I like a picture of Raphael's, a fine horse, a fine day, or the Bay of Naples.—Emilio,' said she, 'have I ever complained during our days of distress here?'

"'You would not have been yourself,' said the old bookseller, gravely.

"'After all, is it not natural for shopkeepers to long for greatness?' continued she, darting a mischievous glance both at Rodolphe and her husband. 'My feet," said she, putting out two charming little feet—' are they made for enduring fatigue? My hands'

—she stretched out a hand to Rodolphe—'are these hands made for hard work? Leave us,' said she to her husband; 'I want to speak to him.'

"The old man went into the *salon* with sublime good nature; he was sure of his wife.

"'I do not wish you,' said she to Rodolphe, 'to accompany us to Geneva. Geneva is a city of scandals. Although I am far above the tittle-tattle of society, I will not be caluminated—not for my own sake, but for *his*. I make it my pride to be the glory of this old man, my only protector after all. We are going to leave. You remain here for some days. When you come to Geneva, make acquaintance with my husband first, and let him introduce you to me. Let us hide our unchangeable and profound affection from the eyes of the world. I love you. You know it; and this is how I will prove it: you shall never discover in my conduct the slightest thing that could arouse your jealousy.'

"She drew him into the corner of the gallery, took him by the head, kissed him on the forehead, and disappeared, leaving him stupefied.

"The next day, Rodolphe learned that the inmates of the Bergmanns' house had left at the break of day. From that moment, residence at Gersau appeared unsupportable, and he started for Vevay by the longest road, travelling faster than he ought to have done;

but, attracted by the waters of the lake where the fair Italian awaited him, he arrived about the end of October at Geneva. To avoid the inconveniences of the city, he lodged in a house situated at Eaux-Vives, outside the ramparts. Once installed, his first care was to ask his host, a retired jeweller, if some Italian refugees from Milan had not lately come to stay at Geneva.

" 'Not that I know of,' his host told him. 'The Prince and Princess Colonna of Rome have taken the residence of Monsieur Jeanrenaud, one of the finest on the lake, for three years. It is situated between the Villa Diodati and the residence of Monsieur Lafin de Dieu, which is let to the Vicomtesse de Beauseant. Prince Colonna has taken it for his daughter and his son-in-law, Prince Gandolphini, a Neapolitan or Sicilian, if you like, a former partisan of King Murat and a victim of the last revolution. These are the last arrivals at Geneva, and they are not Milanese. It required strong interest, and the protection accorded by the Pope to the Colonna family, to obtain from the foreign powers and the King of Naples permission for the Prince and Princess Gandolphini to reside here. Geneva will not do anything to displease the Holy Alliance, to which she owes her independence. Our part is not to offend foreign courts. There are a great many foreigners here—Russians, English.'

"'There are even Genevese.'

"'Yes, sir. Our lake is so fine! Lord Byron lived here about seven years ago, at the Villa Diodati, which everybody goes to see now, like Coppet and Ferney.'

"'Could you not ascertain whether, during the last week, a bookseller of Milan and his wife, named Lamporani, one of the chiefs of the last revolution, have come here?'

"'I can ascertain by going to the strangers' club,' said the retired jeweller.

"Rodolphe's first excursion was naturally to the Villa Diodati, the residence of Lord Byron, which the recent death of the great poet had endowed with still more attraction. Is not death the consecration of genius? The road which from Eaux-Vives follows the shores of the Lake of Geneva is, like all the roads in Switzerland, rather narrow, and in certain places, owing to the rocky nature of the ground, there is scarcely room enough left for the carriages to pass. At some paces from the Jeanrenauds' house, close to which he had arrived without knowing it, Rodolphe heard behind him the noise of a carriage, and, finding himself in a species of gorge, he climbed on to the point of a rock to leave a free passage. Naturally, he looked at the carriage coming towards him, an elegant *calèche* drawn by two magnificent English horses. He

was thunderstruck at seeing, at the back of this *calèche*, Francesca, divinely dressed, by the side of an old lady as stiff as a cameo. A chasseur, dazzling with gold, was holding on behind the carriage. Francesca recognized Rodolphe, and smiled at finding him there, perched like a statue on its pedestal. The carriage, which the lover was enabled to follow with his eyes by climbing the height, turned to enter the gate of a country house, to which he ran.

"'Who lives here?' he asked the gardener.

"'The Prince and Princess Colonna, as well as the Prince and Princess Gandolphini.'

"'Is it not they who have just gone in?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"In a moment the veil fell from the eyes of Rodolphe; he saw through the past clearly.

"'Provided,' said the thunderstruck lover to himself, 'that this is her last mystification!'

"He trembled lest he should have been the plaything of a caprice, for he had heard speak of what a *cappriccio* is to an Italian. But what a crime in the eyes of a woman, to have treated as a shopkeeper a princess of princely birth—to have taken the daughter of one of the most illustrious families of the Middle Ages for the wife of a bookseller! The consciousness of his faults redoubled Rodolphe's desire to know whether he would be disowned, repulsed. He asked

for the Prince Gandolphini, sending up his card, and was immediately received by the sham Lamporani, who came to meet him, and welcomed him with perfect grace, with Neapolitan affability, and took him on to a terrace from which you could see Geneva, the Jura and its slopes studded with villas, and, beyond, the shores of the lake to a wide extent.

"'My wife is faithful to lakes, you see,' said he, after having described the country to his guest. 'We have a sort of concert to-night,' added he, returning towards the magnificent house of Jeanrenaud; 'I hope you will do the princess and myself the pleasure of coming. Two months of misery gone through together are equal to years of friendship.'

"Although devoured by curiosity, Rodolphe did not venture to ask to see the princess; he returned slowly to Eaux-Vives, thinking of the evening. In a few hours, his love, however immense already, was aggrandized by his anxiety and by the expectation of coming events. He understood now the necessity of becoming illustrious, to raise himself to the height, socially speaking, of his idol. Francesca appeared very grand in his eyes from the unaffectedness and simplicity of her conduct at Gersau. The naturally haughty air of the Princess Colonna dismayed Rodolphe, who would have the father and mother of Francesca for enemies—at least, he must expect

it; and the mystery the Princess Gandolphini had so strongly impressed upon him now appeared an admirable proof of affection. By taking precautions for the future, did not Francesca clearly say that she loved Rodolphe?

"At last nine o'clock struck; Rodolphe was able to get into a carriage and say, with an emotion easy to understand, "To the Jeanrenauds' house, the Prince Gandolphini's!"

"At last he entered the *salon*, full of foreigners of the highest distinction, and where he remained of necessity amongst a group near the door—for at the moment they were singing a duet from Rossini.

"At last he could see Francesca, but without being seen by her. The princess was standing two steps from the piano. Her marvellous hair, so long and so abundant, was confined in a circlet of gold. Her face, lighted up by the candles, was radiant with the whiteness peculiar to the Italians, and which only produces its full effect by candlelight. She was in ball dress, exposing to admiration her charming shoulders, the figure of a young girl, and the arms of an antique statue. Her sublime beauty was beyond all possible rivalry, although there were present some charming English and Russians, the prettiest women of Geneva, and some other Italians, amongst whom shone the illustrious Princess of Varese and

the famous singer Tinti, who was singing at the moment.

"Rodolphe, leaning against the doorway, gazed at the princess, darting at her that fixed, persistent, and attractive glance charged with the whole power of the human will concentrated in the sentiment called *desire*, but which then assumes the character of a violent commandment. Did the fire of this glance reach Francesca? Was Francesca expecting every moment to see Rodolphe? At the end of a few minutes she cast a glance towards the door, as if attracted by this current of love, and her eyes, without hesitation, encountered the eye of Rodolphe. A slight shudder agitated this magnificent face and this splendid frame. The mental shock had its reaction; Francesca blushed. Rodolphe lived, as it were, a whole life in this exchange, so rapid that it can only be compared to a flash of lightning. But what can compare with his happiness? He was beloved! The sublime princess kept, in the face of the world, in the splendid *Maison Jeanrenaud*, the promise given by the poor exile, the capricious girl of the *Maison Bergmann*. The intoxication of such a moment renders a man a slave for life! A sly smile, elegant and artful, frank and triumphant, agitated the lips of the Princess Gandolphini, who, at a moment when she thought herself unobserved, gave

Rodolphe a look which seemed to beg his pardon for having deceived him as to her station. When the piece was finished, Rodolphe was able to get to the prince, who graciously conducted him to his wife. Rodolphe went through the ceremony of an official presentation to the Prince and Princess Colonna and Francesca. When this was over, the princess had to take part in the famous *quatuor* "Mi manca la voce," which was executed by her, by Tinti, by Genovese the famous tenor, and by a celebrated Italian prince then in exile, whose voice, if he had not been a prince, would have made him one of the princes of art.

"'Sit down there,' said Francesca to Rodolphe, pointing to her own chair. '*Oimè!* I am afraid there is a mistake in the names; for the last few moments I have been the Princess Rodolphini."

"This was said with a grace, a charm, a simplicity, which recalled by this avowal, cloaked in a jest, the happy days of Gersau. Rodolphe experienced the delicious sensation of listening to the voice of the woman he adored, and being so near to her that his cheek was almost brushed by the stuff of her dress and the gauze of her scarf. But when, at such a moment, "Mi manca la voce" is being sung, and this quartette is executed by the finest voices of Italy, it is easy to understand how tears came to moisten Rodolphe's eyes.

"In love, as in everything else perhaps, there are certain facts, infinitesimal in themselves, but the result of a thousand trifling circumstances anterior, and whose significance becomes immense when referred to the past and connected with the future. You have felt a thousand times the worth of the person beloved; but a trifle—the perfect union of the kindred souls during a promenade by a word, by an unexpected *proof* of love—carries the sentiment to its highest degree. In short, to explain this moral fact by an image which, from the first ages of the world, has had the most incontestable success, there are, in a long chain, necessary points of junction, at which the cohesion is stronger than in the series of rings. This recognition between Rodolphe and Francesca during this evening, in the face of the world, was one of those supreme points which connect the future with the past, which rivet more strongly on the heart real attachments. Perhaps it was of these sparse rivets that Bossuet spoke, when he compared to them the rarity of the happy moments of our life—he whose love was so ardent and so secret.

"Next to the pleasure of admiring the beloved object comes that of seeing her admired by all. Rodolphe enjoyed them both at once. Love is a treasure of recollections, and although that of Ro-

dolphe was already full, he added to it some precious pearls—smiles bestowed aside on him alone, furtive glances, inflections of voice in singing which Francesca created for him, but which made the Tinti pale with jealousy, so much were they applauded. Accordingly, all his power of desire, the special feature of his character, was concentrated on the lovely Roman, who became unalterably the source and the object of all his thoughts and all his actions. Rodolphe loved as all women dream of being loved, with a strength, a constancy, a cohesion, which made of Francesca the very substance of his heart. He felt her mingled with his blood as a purer blood, with his soul as a more perfect soul. She would henceforth underlie the slightest efforts of his life, like the golden sand of the Mediterranean under the water. In short, the slightest aspiration of Rodolphe was an active hope.

"At the end of a few days Francesca admitted this immense love; but it was so natural, so thoroughly mutual, that she was not surprised at it. She was worthy of it.

"'What is there surprising,' said she to Rodolphe, whilst walking with him on the terrace of her garden, after having surprised one of those movements of self-conceit so natural to the French in the expression of their sentiments—'what is there marvellous in your loving a young and beautiful woman, who is

artiste enough to be able to earn her living like the Tinti, and who is able to gratify your vanity? Where is the boor who would not become an Amadis? But that is not the question between us. What you have got to do is to love with constancy, with persistence, and at a distance for years, with no other pleasure than that of knowing yourself beloved.'

"'Alas!' said Rodolphe, 'will you not consider my fidelity destitute of merit, seeing me absorbed by the toils of a devouring ambition? Do you think I should be willing to see you exchange some day the grand name of the Princess Gandolphini for that of an unknown man? I shall strive to become one of the most celebrated men of my country, to be rich, to be great, so that you may be as proud of my name as of your own name of Colonna.'

"'I should be very sorry not to see you with these sentiments in your heart,' she answered, with a charming smile. 'But do not wear yourself out with the labours of ambition. Keep young. They say that politics soon make a man old.'

"The rarest quality in women is a certain gaiety which does not diminish their tenderness. This mingling of a profound sentiment with the gaiety of youth added at this moment adorable attractions to Francesca. Here is the key to her character. She laughs and grows tender; she gets excited, and returns

to delicate raillery with an impulsiveness and an ease which constitute her the charming and delicious person whose reputation, indeed, has spread far beyond Italy; she conceals under her feminine graces a profound erudition, due to the extremely monotonous and almost monastic life she led in the old castle of the Colonnas. This rich heiress was originally destined to the cloister, being the fourth child of the Prince and Princess Colonna, but the death of her two brothers and her elder sisters suddenly drew her from her seclusion to be one of the best matches in the Roman States. Her elder sister having been affianced to the Prince Gandolphini, one of the richest landowners of Sicily, Francesca was given to him so as not to interfere with family arrangements. The Colonnas and the Gandolphinis had always intermarried. From nine to sixteen, Francesca, educated by a monsignore of the family, had read the whole library of the Colonnas, to keep her ardent imagination occupied by the study of science, art, and literature. But she acquired, in the course of these studies, that taste for independence and liberal ideas which made her throw herself, as well as her husband, into the revolution. Rodolphe did not yet know that, without counting five living languages, Francesca knew Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. This charming creature had admirably comprehended that one of the

first conditions of erudition in a woman is to keep it carefully concealed.

"Rodolphe remained the whole winter at Geneva. This winter passed like a day. When the spring arrived, notwithstanding the exquisite delight arising from the society of a woman of talent, prodigiously learned, young, and lively, the lover underwent cruel sufferings, supported, however, with courage, but which sometimes showed themselves on his physiognomy, which peeped out in his manners and conversation, perhaps because he did not think they were shared by her. At times he was irritated whilst admiring the calmness of Francesca, who, like the English, seemed to take a pride in allowing no expression to appear on her face, whose serenity defied love. He would have had her agitated. He accused her of having no feeling, believing in the prejudice which ascribes to the Italian women a feverish excitability.

"'I am a Roman,' Francesca gravely answered him one day, taking seriously some of Rodolphe's jesting on this subject.

"There was a depth in the accent of this answer which gave it the appearance of a fierce irony, and made Rodolphe's heart beat. The month of May displayed the treasures of its youthful verdure; the sun at times had as much strength as in the middle

of the summer. The two lovers were then leaning on a stone balustrade which, at a part of the terrace where the ground is perpendicular to the lake, surmounts the wall of a staircase by which you descend to get into a boat. From the neighbouring villa, which has a nearly similar landing-place, glided out, like a swan, a yawl, with its flaming flag, its pavilion with crimson canopy, beneath which a charming woman was indolently seated on red cushions, with fresh flowers in her hair, accompanied by a young man dressed like a sailor, who rowed with all the more grace that he was under the eyes of this woman.

"'They are happy!' said Rodolphe, with a bitter accent. 'Claire de Bourgogne, the last of the only house that could rival the house of France——'

"'Oh, she is of a bastard branch; and, besides, through the women——'

"'At all events, she is the Vicomtesse de Beauseant, and did not——'

"'Hesitate, you mean, to bury herself with Monsieur Gaston de Nueil,' said the daughter of the Colonnas. 'She is only a Frenchwoman, and I am an Italian, my dear sir.'

"Francesca quitted the balustrade, leaving Rodolphe there, and went to the end of the terrace, from which an immense extent of the lake is em-

braced. Seeing her walk slowly, Rodolphe had a suspicion that he had wounded this spirit, innocent but not ignorant, at once so proud and so humble. He turned cold. He followed Francesca, who signed to him to leave her alone; but he took no notice of the admonition, and surprised her in the act of drying her tears. Tears from such a resolute nature!

"'Francesca,' said he, taking her hand, 'is there a single regret in your heart?'

"She kept silence, and disengaged her hand, in which she held her embroidered handkerchief, to dry her eyes again.

"'Pardon me,' he went on; and, with a sudden impulse, he put his lips to her eyes to stop her tears with his kisses.

"Francesca was not even aware of this passionate movement, so violently was she agitated. Rodolphe, believing in her compliance, grew bolder; he seized Francesca by the waist, pressed her to his heart, and snatched a kiss. But she disengaged herself by a magnificent movement of offended modesty, and at two steps off, looking at him without anger, but with resolution—'Leave here to-night,' she said; 'we shall not see each other again before Naples.'

"Notwithstanding the severity of this order, it was religiously executed, for Francesca desired it.

"On his return to Paris, Rodolphe found awaiting him the portrait of the Princess Gandolphini, done by Schinner, as Schinner can paint portraits. This artist had passed through Geneva on his way to Italy. As he had positively refused to take the portraits of several women, Rodolphe did not believe that the prince, who was excessively desirous of his wife's portrait, would be able to vanquish the repugnance of the celebrated painter; but Francesca had, no doubt, fascinated him, and obtained from him what was almost a prodigy—an original portrait for Rodolphe and a copy for Emilio. This is what he learnt from a charming and delicious letter, in which imagination made itself amends for the restraint imposed by the religion of conventionality. The lover answered it. Thus began an uninterrupted correspondence between Rodolphe and Francesca, the only pleasure they allowed themselves.

"Rodolphe, the prey of an ambition legitimized by his love, immediately set to work. He sought fortune in the first place, and embarked in an enterprise into which he threw all his abilities and all his capital; but he had to struggle with the inexperience of youth against a duplicity which triumphed over him. Three years were lost in a vast enterprise—three years of efforts and courage.

"The Villele ministry succumbed at the same time

as Rodolphe. Immediately, the intrepid lover resolved to demand from politics what business had refused him; but before venturing into the storms of this career, he went, wounded and suffering, to have his wounds healed and renew his courage, to Naples, where the Prince and Princess Gandolphini had been recalled and restored to their property on the accession of the king. In the middle of his struggle it was a repose full of bliss. He passed three months at the Villa Gandolphini, cradled in hope.

"Rodolphe recommenced the edifice of his fortune. Already his talents had been remarked; he was about, at last, to realize the hopes of his ambition. A post of eminence had been promised to his zeal, as a recompense for his devotion and for services rendered, when the storm of July, 1830, broke out and his barque foundered again.

"She and God—these are the only witnesses of the most courageous efforts and the most audacious attempts of a young man endowed with abilities, but to whom, hitherto, the aid of the providence of fools, good luck, has been denied; and this indefatigable athlete, sustained by love, is about to recommence fresh combats, lighted on by a ray of affection and a constant heart! Lovers, pray for him!"

On finishing this narrative, Mademoiselle de Watte-

ville felt her cheeks on fire; fever was in her veins. She wept, but with rage. This tale, inspired by the literature of the day, was the first piece of reading of the kind that Rosalie had been permitted to devour. Love was painted in it—if not with the hand of a master, at least by a man who appeared to relate his own impressions; and the truth, even unskilfully told, must always touch a virgin heart. This was the secret of the terrible agitation, of the fever and the tears of Rosalie: she was jealous of Francesca Colonna. She did not doubt the sincerity of this poem. Albert had taken a pleasure in relating the birth of his passion, whilst concealing, no doubt, the names, and perhaps the places. Rosalie was seized with an infernal curiosity. What woman would not, like her, have wished to know the real name of her rival? For she loved! In reading these pages, contagious to her, she had said to herself the solemn word, "I love!" She loved Albert, and she felt in her heart a gnawing desire to dispute him, to snatch him away from this unknown rival. She reflected that she did not know music, and that she was not handsome.

"He will never love me," she said to herself. This word redoubled her desire to know whether she was not mistaken—if Albert really loved an Italian princess, and was loved by her. During this fatal night, the spirit of rapid decision which distinguished the

famous Watteville developed itself undiminished in his heiress. She conceived some of those extravagant plans around which, indeed, hovers the imagination of all young girls, when, in the midst of the solitude to which they are confined by imprudent mothers, they are excited by a capital event which the system of compression to which they have been subjected has not been able to foresee or to prevent. She thought of descending with a ladder, by the kiosk, into the garden of the house in which Albert lived—of taking advantage of the advocate's sleep to look through his window into the interior of his cabinet. She thought of writing to him. She thought of bursting the bonds of Bisontine society, by introducing Albert into the *salon* of the Hôtel de Rupt. This enterprise, which would have appeared the height of impossibility to the Abbé de Grancey himself, was the affair of an idea.

"Ah!" said she to herself, "my father has got into disputes at his estate of Rouxey; I will go there! If he has not gone to law, I will make him; and then *he* will come to our house," she exclaimed, springing from her bed to the window, to look at the enchanted light which illuminated Albert's night.

It was striking one; he was still asleep.

"I shall see him when he gets up. Perhaps he will come to the window."

At this moment Mademoiselle de Watteville was the witness of an event which must place in her hands the means of arriving at a knowledge of Albert's secrets. By the light of the moon, she perceived two arms stretched out from the kiosk, and which were assisting Jérôme, Albert's servant, to get over the wall and come into the kiosk. In the accomplice of Jérôme, Rosalie immediately recognized Mariette, the lady's-maid.

"Mariette and Jérôme!" said she to herself. "An ugly woman like Mariette! They must certainly be ashamed of each other."

If Mariette was horridly ugly and thirty-six years old, she had inherited several pieces of land. Having been seventeen years in the service of Madame de Watteville, who esteemed her much on account of her devoutness, her honesty, and her long standing in the house, she had no doubt economized and invested her wages and perquisites. Now, at the rate of about ten louis a year, she must be worth, reckoning the compound interest and her inheritances, about ten thousand francs. In the eyes of Jérôme, ten thousand francs changed the laws of optics: he saw in Mariette a fine figure. He did not see the holes and seams a frightful small-pox had left in her plain, flat face; for him the distorted mouth was straight; and since the advocate Savaron, by taking him into his service,

had brought him close to the Hôtel de Rupt, he had laid regular siege to the devout lady's-maid, who was as stiff and prudish as her mistress, and, like all ugly old maids, more exacting than the best-looking girls.

If the nocturnal scene of the kiosk is now made intelligible to intelligent people, it was not at all so to Rosalie, who, nevertheless, acquired the most dangerous of all knowledge, that taught by a bad example. A mother brings up her daughter severely, keeps her under her wings for seventeen years, and in an hour a servant destroys this long and arduous toil, sometimes by a word, often by a gesture! Rosalie went to bed again, not without reflecting on all the advantages she might derive from her discovery. The next morning, going to Mass accompained by Mariette (the baroness was indisposed), Rosalie took her maid's arm, which considerably astonished the Comtoise.

"Mariette," she said to her, "is Jérôme in his master's confidence?"

"I don't know, mademoiselle."

"Don't play the innocent with me," answered Mademoiselle de Watteville, sharply. "You allowed him to embrace you last night in the kiosk. I am no longer astonished at your so highly approving of my mother's plans for its embellishment."

Rosalie felt the tremor which seized Mariette by that of her arm.

"I do not mean you any harm," said Rosalie in continuation. "Reassure yourself; I will not say a word to my mother, and you can see Jérôme as often you like."

"But, mademoiselle," answered Mariette, "it is all quite right and proper. Jérôme has no other intentions than to marry me."

"But why do you have meetings in the middle of the night, then?"

Mariette, floored, could not find an answer.

"Listen, Mariette. I myself am in love also! I love in secret and all alone. I am, after all, the only child of my father and mother; so you have more to hope for from me than from anybody else in the world."

"Certainly, mademoiselle, you may reckon on us for life and death," cried Mariette, delighted at this unforeseen result.

"In the first place, silence for silence," said Rosalie. "I do not want to marry Monsieur de Soulas; but I require, and absolutely, a certain thing. My protection is only to be obtained at this price."

"What?" asked Mariette.

"I want to see the letters Monsieur Savaron sends to the post by Jérôme."

"But what for?" said Mariette, alarmed.

"Oh, only to read them; and you will put them

into the post yourself afterwards. It will only delay them a little, that is all."

At this moment Mademoiselle de Watteville and Mariette entered the church, and each of them indulged in her reflections instead of reading the ordinary of the Mass.

"My God! how many sins are there in all this?" said Mariette to herself.

Rosalie, whose mind, and head, and heart were upset by the reading of the tale, looked upon it, at last, as a sort of history written for her rival. By dint of reflecting, as children do, on the same thing, she eventually thought that the *Revue de l'Est* must be sent to Albert's beloved.

"Oh!" she said to herself, on her knees, her head buried in her hands, and in the attitude of a person absorbed in prayer, "oh, how am I to get my father to examine the list of the people to whom this review is sent?"

After breakfast, she walked round the garden with her father, coaxing him, and got him into the kiosk.

"Do you think, dear old papa, that our *Revue* is sent abroad?"

"It has only just started."

"Well, I bet it is."

"It is scarcely possible."

"Go and see, and take down the names of the foreign subscribers."

Two hours afterwards, Monsieur de Watteville said to his daughter, "I am right; there is not yet a single subscriber in foreign countries. They hope to have some at Neuchâtel, at Berne, and at Geneva. They do send a copy to Italy, but gratis, to a Milanese lady, at her country house on the Lago Maggiore at Belgirate."

"Her name?" said Rosalie, eagerly.

"The Duchess of Argaiolo."

"Do you know her, father?"

"I have heard of her. She is Princess Soderini by birth. She is a Florentine, a very great lady, and quite as rich as her husband, who possesses one of the finest fortunes in Lombardy. Their villa on the Lago Maggiore is one of the curiosities of Italy."

Two days later, Mariette handed the following letter to Mademoiselle de Watteville:—

Albert Savaron to Léopold Hannequin.

"Well, yes, my dear friend, I am at Besançon, whilst you thought I was travelling. I would not tell you anything until the moment when success was beginning, and it has dawned. Yes, dear Léopold, after so many abortive enterprises in which I have expended the purest of my blood, in which I have

thrown away so many efforts, consumed so much courage, I have resolved to do like you—to take the beaten path, the high-road, the longest and the surest. What a start I see you give on your notarial chair! But do not believe that there is anything of any sort changed in my inner life, the secret of which is known to you alone in the world, and with the reserve imposed by *her*. I did not tell you so, my friend, but I was horribly worn out at Paris. The result of the first enterprise, on which I placed all my hopes, and which turned out unsuccessful through the profound rascality of my two partners, who combined to cheat and plunder me—me, to whose activity everything was due!—made me give up the pursuit of pecuniary fortune, after having thus wasted three years of my life, of which one was spent in lawsuits. Perhaps I should have come worse off if I had not been obliged to study the law at twenty years of age. I have wished to become a politician, solely to be some day included in an edict on the peerage under the title of Count Albert Savaron de Savarus, and to revive in France a great name which has become extinct in Belgium, although I am neither legitimate nor legitimized."

"Ah! I was sure of it; he is of noble blood!" exclaimed Rosalie, dropping the letter.

"You knew how hard I studied—what an obscure but devoted and useful journalist, what an admirable

secretary, I was to the statesman, who, on his part, was faithful to me in 1829. Thrust back again into obscurity by the revolution of July, just as my name was beginning to emerge—at the moment when, as a *maître des requêtes,* I was about at last to become a part, as a necessary wheel, of the political machine—I committed the blunder of remaining faithful to the vanquished, of combating for them, without them. Ah! why was I only three and thirty, and how was it I didn't beg you to render me eligible! I concealed from you all my devotedness and my perils. What could I do? I had faith. We should not have agreed. Ten months ago, whilst you always saw me so gay and happy, writing my political articles, I was in despair. I found myself, at seven and thirty, with two thousand francs for my whole fortune, without the least celebrity, having just failed in a noble enterprise, a daily paper which only satisfied a want of the future, instead of addressing itself to the passions of the moment. I no longer knew what to do; and I felt my own powers! I went about, sad and dejected, in the solitary places of that Paris which had deserted me, thinking of my disappointed ambitions, but without abandoning them. Oh, what letters, stamped with rage, did I not write then to *her,* my second conscience, my other self! At times I said to myself, 'Why have I made out so vast a programme

for my life? Why desire all? Why not await happiness whilst devoting myself to some quasi-mechanical occupation?'

"I cast my eyes then on an humble appointment by which I could get a living. I was about to have the management of a newspaper under an editor who did not know much, an ambitious man of wealth, when I was seized with terror. 'Would she accept for her husband a lover who had sunk so low?' I said to myself. This reflection sent me back again to two and twenty.

"Oh, dear Léopold, how the soul wears itself out in these perplexities! What must the caged eagles suffer then, the imprisoned lions? They suffer all that Napoleon suffered, not at St. Helena, but on the quay of the Tuileries, on the 10th of August, when he saw Louis XVI. defending himself so badly—he who knew how to put down sedition, as he afterwards did on the same spot, in Vendemiaire. Well, my life has been this day's sufferings spread over four years. How many speeches to the Chamber have I not delivered to the deserted alleys of the Bois de Boulogne? These useless improvisations have at least sharpened my tongue, and accustomed my mind to put its ideas into words. During these secret torments you were getting married, you were completing the payment for your business, and you were becoming *adjoint* to the

mayor of your *arrondissement,* after having won the cross by getting wounded at St. Merri.

"Listen! When I was quite a little fellow, and tormented the cock-chafers, there was a movement of these poor insects which almost gave me the fever. It was when I saw them making repeated efforts to take wing, but without being able to fly, although they succeeded in moving their wings. We used to say, '*They are counting!*' Was it sympathy? Was it a vision of the future? Oh, to spread one's wings, and not to be able to fly! That has been my fate ever since the splendid enterprise with which they disgusted me, but which has since enriched four families.

"In short, seven months ago, I resolved to make myself a name at the bar of Paris, seeing what openings had been left by the promotion of so many barristers to high offices. But, remembering the rivalries I had already observed in the bosom of the press, and how difficult it is to get on in a career of any sort in Paris, the arena where so many champions encounter, I took a resolution cruel for myself, but of sure effect, and perhaps more rapid than any other. You had thoroughly explained to me, in our conversations, the constitution of society at Besançon; the impossibility of a stranger getting on there, causing the slightest sensation, marrying, penetrating into society, or succeeding in anything whatever. It was

there I resolved to go and plant my flag, reasonably thinking that I should there escape competition, and find myself the only one secretly canvassing for election. The Comtois will not receive the stranger; the stranger will not receive them. They refuse to admit him into their *salons*; he will never go into them. He will never show himself anywhere, not even in the streets! But there is a class which elects members; it is the commercial class. I will specially study commercial questions, which I know something of already. I will gain causes; I will arrange differences; I will become the first advocate of Besançon. Later on, I will start a Review, in which I will defend the interests of the province, or I will create, support, or revive them. When I have acquired, one by one, enough votes, my name will come out of the urn. They will disdain for some time the unknown barrister, but something will happen to bring him to light—a gratuitous speech in court, an affair the other barristers will not undertake. If I once speak, I am sure of success.

"Well, my dear Léopold, I packed up my library in eleven boxes, I bought the law-books which might be useful to me, and put the whole, as well as my furniture, on the road to Besançon. I took out my certificates, I made up a thousand crowns, and came to wish you good-bye. The mail dropped me at

Besançon, where in the space of three days, I selected a small suite of apartments looking on to a garden. I arranged sumptuously the mysterious cabinet, in which I spend my days and nights, in which shines the portrait of my idol, of her to whom my life is consecrated, who absorbs it, who is the source of my efforts, the secret of my courage, the cause of my talent. Then, when the furniture and books arrived, I took an intelligent servant, and remained for five months like a dormouse in the winter.

"I had been inscribed on the list of advocates. At last, I was officially appointed to defend a poor devil at the assizes, no doubt in order to hear me speak, at all events, once! One of the most influential merchants of Besançon was on the jury; he had a complicated case going on. I used all my efforts in this cause to impress this man, and I had the most complete success in the world. My client was innocent; I had the two culprits, who were amongst the witnesses, dramatically arrested. Even the court joined in the admiration of the public. I was able to save the self-love of the *juge d'instruction* by showing the almost impossibility of detecting a plot so well laid. I got my great merchant for a client, and I gained him his cause. The chapter of the cathedral selected me for counsel in a heavy case with the town, which had been going on for four years; I won it. In these cases, I became

the greatest advocate of Franche Comté. But I enshroud my life in the most profound mystery, and thus conceal my pretensions. I have contracted habits which relieve me from accepting any invitation. I can only be consulted from six to eight in the morning; I go to bed after dinner, and work during the night.

"The vicar-general, a man of intelligence and great influence, who confided to me the cause of the chapter, already lost in the first stage, naturally spoke of gratitude. 'Sir,' I said to him, 'I will win your cause; but I want no fee. I want more' (sudden start of the *abbé*). 'Know that I lose enormously by appearing as the adversary of the town. I came here in order to go back a deputy; I only take commercial cases because the commercial men return the members, and they will mistrust me if I plead for *the priests*—for you are *the priests* to them. If I accept your case, it is because I was, in 1828, private secretary to such a ministry' (fresh movement of astonishment on the part of my *abbé*)—'*maître des requêtes*, under the name of Albert de Savarus' (another movement). 'I have remained faithful to monarchical principles, but as you do not possess a majority in Besançon, I must acquire votes amongst the tradesmen. Therefore, the fee I ask of you is the votes that you may be able to procure me at the opportune moment and in secret. Let us keep each other's secret, and I will plead, gratis,

all the affairs of all the priests in the diocese. Not a word of my antecedents, and let us be true to each other.'

"When he came to thank me, he handed me a five hundred franc note, and said in my ear, 'The votes still hold good.' In the five conferences we have had, I have made a friend, I believe, of the vicar-general. Now, overwhelmed with business, I only undertake the merchants', saying that commercial questions are my specialty. These tactics connect me with the commercial men, and allow me to court the influential people. Thus, all goes well. In a few months I shall have found in Besançon a house to buy, which will give me the electoral qualification. I reckon on you to lend me the capital necessary for this purchase. If I die, if I fail, there would not be loss enough to be a consideration between us. The rents will pay you the interest; and, besides, I shall take care to wait for a good opportunity, so that you may not lose anything by this necessary mortgage.

"Ah! my dear Léopold, never did gambler, having the remains of his fortune in his pocket, and playing with it at the *Cercle des Étrangers*, in one last night from which he will rise either rich or ruined, feel in his ears the perpetual singing, on his hands the nervous dampness, in his head the fevered agitation, in his body the internal tremors, that I ex-

perience every day while playing my last stake in the game of ambition. Alas ! my dear and only friend, I have been fighting now for nearly ten years. This combat with men and things, in which I have incessantly exerted all my strength and all my energy, in which I have so worn out the springs of desire, has undermined me, so to speak, internally. With all the appearance of health and strength, I feel myself ruined. Every day carries away a shred of my inner life ; at each new effort, I feel that I shall never be able to repeat it. I have no more strength or power left, except for happiness, and if that does not come and place its crown of roses on my head, the *me* I am will exist no longer. I shall become a ruined object ; I should no longer desire anything in the world, nor wish to be anything in it. You know that power and glory, the immense moral fortune I pursue, is only secondary ; it is for me the means of happiness, the pedestal of my idol.

"To expire on reaching the goal, like the ancient runner ; to see fortune and death arrive together at the threshold ; to obtain the object of our love when love is extinct ; to possess no longer the power of enjoyment, when we have earned the means of happiness—oh, how many men have undergone this destiny !

"There is certainly a moment when Tantalus stops, folds his arms, and defies the infernals, rejecting his

part of an eternal dupe. I should be at this point if anything were to upset my plans; if, after having bowed myself to the dust of the province, having crawled like a hungry tiger round these merchants, these electors, to get their votes; if, after having worked up dry cases, having given my time—a time that I might have spent on the Lago Maggiore, looking at the waters she looks at, reposing under her eyes, listening to her voice—I did not bound to the tribune, to conquer there the glory that must surround the name which is to succeed that of Argaiolo. More than that, Léopold; there are days when I feel a vaporous langour; a mortal disgust rises from the depths of my soul, above all when, in long reveries, I have plunged by anticipation into the midst of the joys of happy love! Does desire, then, only inspire us with a certain dose of strength, and will it perish under a too great effusion of its substance? After all, at this moment my life is fair, lighted on by faith, by work, and by love. Adieu, my friend; I embrace your children, and you will recall to the recollection of your excellent wife

"Your ALBERT."

Rosalie read this letter twice over, and its general sense was engraved on her heart. She penetrated suddenly into the previous life of Albert, for her

quick intelligence explained its details and enabled her to take in its whole extent. By comparing this confidence with the tale published in the *Revue*, she understood Albert thoroughly. She naturally exaggerated the proportions, already so grand, of this noble soul and this powerful will; and her love for Albert became then a passion whose violence was increased by all the force of her youth, by the dullness of her solitude, by the secret energy of her character. To love is an effect of the law of nature in a young girl, but when her longing for affection is fixed on an extraordinary man, it is mingled with the enthusiasm which overflows in youthful hearts. Accordingly, Mademoiselle de Watteville arrived in a few days at a quasi-morbid and very dangerous phase of amatory excitement. The baroness was very satisfied with her daughter, who, under the empire of her profound preoccupation, no longer resisted her, appeared devoted to her various feminine occupations, and realized her *beau ideal* of an obedient daughter.

The barrister spoke two or three times a week. Although overwhelmed with business, he contrived to appear in court, to conduct the commercial litigation and the *Revue*, and remained in a profound mystery, comprehending that the more his influence was silent and concealed, the more real it would be. But he neglected no means of success, studying the list of

Bisontine electors and discovering their interests, their characters, their various friendships, and their antipathies. Did ever a cardinal who wanted to be pope take so much trouble?

One evening, Mariette, when she came to dress Rosalie for a *soirée*, brought her, not without groaning over this abuse of confidence, a letter whose address made Mademoiselle de Watteville tremble, and turn pale, and blush.

À Madame la Duchesse d'Argaiolo,
Née Princesse Soderini,
à Belgirate,
Lac Majeur,
Italie.

This address flashed on her eyes as the ***Mane, Thecel, Phares***, must have flashed on the eyes of Belshazzar. After having hidden the letter, Rosalie went down to go with her mother to Madame de Chavoncourt's, and during the whole of this eternal evening she was assailed by remorse and scruples. She had already felt shame at having violated the secrecy of Albert's letter to Léopold. She had asked herself several times whether, knowing this crime, infamous inasmuch as it was necessarily unpunished, the noble Albert could have any esteem for her. Her conscience energetically answered her, "No!" She had expiated her fault by doing self-imposed penance.

She fasted; she mortified herself by remaining on her knees, with her arms crossed, and saying prayers for several hours. She had compelled Mariette to the same acts of repentance. The truest asceticism mingled with her passion, and rendered it all the more dangerous.

"Shall I read or shall I not read the letter?" she asked herself whilst listening to the little De Chavoncourts. One was sixteen, and the other seventeen and a half. Rosalie looked upon her two friends as little girls, because they were not secretly in love. "If I read it," she said to herself, after having vibrated for an hour between yes or no, "it will certainly be the last. Since I have done so much to know what he writes to his friend, why should I not know what he writes to *her?* If it is a horrible crime, is it not a proof of love? Oh, Albert, am I not your wife?"

When Rosalie was in bed, she opened the letter, dated from day to day, so as to give the duchess a faithful picture of the life and sentiments of Albert.

"25th.

"MY DEAR LIFE!

"All goes well. To the conquests I had already made I have just added a precious one; I have rendered a service to one of the most influential personages at the elections. Like the critics, who

make reputations without ever being able to make one for themselves, he makes deputies without ever being able to become one. The good man wished to prove his gratitude at a cheap rate, almost without untying his purse-string, by asking me, 'Would you like to go into the Chamber? I can get you elected a deputy.' 'If I were to resolve to embrace a political career,' I answered him very hypocritically, 'it would be to devote myself to the Comté, which I love, and where I am appreciated.' 'Well, we will decide you, and we shall have an influence in the Chamber through you, for you will shine there.'

"Thus, my beloved angel, whatever you may say, my perseverance will be crowned with success. In a little while, I shall speak from the summit of the French tribune to my country and to Europe. My name will be wafted to you by the hundred voices of the French press.

"Yes, as you tell me, I came to Besançon old, and Besançon has aged me still more; but, like Sextus V., I shall be young on the morrow of my election. I shall enter on my true life, into my proper sphere. Shall we not be then on an equality? The Count Savaron de Savarus, ambassador to I don't know where, may surely marry a Princess Soderini, widow of the Duke d'Argaiolo. Triumph brings back youth to men fortified by incessant combats? Oh, my life,

with what joy did I rush from my library to my cabinet, to your dear portrait, to which I told my progress before writing to you! Yes, my own votes, those of the vicar-general, those of the people I shall oblige, and those of this client, already assure my election.

"26th.

"We have entered on the twelfth year since the happy night when, by a look, the fair duchess ratified the promises of the proscribed Francesca. Ah! dearest, you are thirty-two; I am thirty-five; the good duke is seventy-seven—that is to say, his age is ten years more than our two—and he is still in good health. I have nearly as much patience as love; and, besides, I want a few years more to raise my fortune to the height of your name. You see, I am gay; I joke to-day. Such is the effect of hope. Sadness or gaiety, everything comes from you. The hope of getting on always brings me back to the morrow of the day I saw you for the first time, in which my life became attached to yours, like the earth to the sun. *Qual pianto* these eleven years, for it is the twenty-sixth of December, the anniversary of my arrival at your villa on the Lake of Constance. For eleven years now I have been bewailing myself, and you shining above me like a star placed beyond the reach of a mortal.

"27th.

"No, dearest, do not go to Milan; stay at Belgirate. Milan frightens me. I do not like the abominable Milanese habit of chatting every evening at the Scala with a dozen people, amongst whom it would be singular if one did not say some sweet things to you. For me, solitude is like the piece of amber, in the bosom of which an insect lives eternally in its unchangeable beauty. The body and soul of a woman remain thus pure and in the symmetry of their youth. Is it the *Tedeschi* that you regret?

"28th.

"Your statue will never be finished, then? I should like to have you in marble, in painting, in miniature, in every style to deceive my impatience. I am still expecting the view of Belgirate from the south, and that from the gallery. They are the only ones wanting. I am so busy that I can say nothing but a nothing to-day, but this nothing is everything. Was it not out of nothing that God made the world? This nothing is a word, the word of God: *I love you!*

"30th.

"Ah! I have received your journal. Thanks for your punctuality. You felt pleased, then, at seeing the details of our first acquaintance thus published? Alas! although they were disguised, I was terribly

afraid of offending you. We had no novel, and a *Revue* without a novel is a beauty without hair. *Uninventive* by nature, and in despair, I took the only poesy in my soul, the only adventure in my memory; I brought it down to a readable tone, and I never ceased to think of you whilst writing the only literary production which will ever come from my heart—I do not say from my pen. Did not the transformation of the ferocious Sormano into Gina make you laugh?

"You ask, how is my health? Why, much better than in Paris. Although I work tremendously, the calmness of the scene has an influence on the soul. What fatigués and ages one, dear angel, is the anguish of deceived vanity, the perpetual irritations of Paris life, the contests of rival ambitions. Peace is a balm. If you knew what pleasure your letter has given me, that nice long letter in which you tell the trifling incidents of your life! No; you will never know, you women, to what an extent a real lover is interested by these trifles. The sight of the scrap of your new dress gave me immense pleasure. Can it be a matter of indifference to know how you are dressed, whether your noble brow is wrinkled, whether our authors amuse you, whether the songs of Canalis affect you? I read the books you read. There is nothing, even to your excursion on the lake, which does not

interest me. Your letter is noble and gentle as your soul. O heavenly and constantly adored flower! could I have lived without these dear letters, which, for eleven years, have sustained me on my difficult path like a ray of light, like a perfume, like a regular chant, like a divine food, like everything that consoles and charms life? •Do not fail me. If you knew my anxiety on the eve of the day I receive them, and the suffering the delay of a day causes me! Is she ill! Is it *he?* I am between Paradise and Gehenna; I go mad. *O mia cara diva!* Continue to cultivate music, exercise your voice, study. I am charmed with the conformity of studies and hours which causes us, although separated by the Alps, to live in precisely the same manner. This idea charms me and gives me courage. When I pleaded for the first time—I have not told you so before—I fancied you were listening to me, and I suddenly felt the movement of inspiration which elevates the poet above humanity. If I go to the Chamber, you must come to Paris to be present at my *début.*

"30th, Evening.

"My God! how I love you! Alas! I have staked too much on my love and my hopes. An accident which should upset this overloaded barque would destroy my life. It is three years since I have seen you, and at the idea of going to Belgirate my heart

beats so violently, I am obliged to stop. To see you; to hear that infantine and caressing voice; to embrace with the eyes that ivory skin so dazzling in the light, and beneath which beats your noble heart; to admire your fingers running over the keys; to receive your whole soul in a look, and your heart in the accent of an '*Oimé*' or an 'Alberto;' to walk together amongst your orange trees in flower; to live for some months in the bosom of this sublime scene;—that is life. Oh, what folly to run after power, fame, fortune! It is all at Belgirate: there is poetry, there is glory. I ought to have made myself your steward, or, as the dear tyrant whom we cannot hate proposed, lived there as *cavalière servente,* which our ardent passion did not permit us to accept. Adieu, my angel. You will pardon me my next fit of sadness for the sake of this gaiety, fallen like a ray from the torch of hope, which until now had appeared a Will-o'-the-wisp."

"How he loves!" exclaimed Rosalie, letting fall the letter, which seemed too heavy to hold. "After eleven years, to write like this!"

"Mariette," said Mademoiselle de Watteville to the lady's-maid, the next morning, "go and put this letter in the post. Tell Jérôme I know all I wanted to know, and he is to be faithful to Monsieur Albert. We will confess these sins without saying to whom the letters belonged, or where they were going. I have done very wrong; I am the only culprit."

"You have been crying, mademoiselle," said Mariette.

"Yes; and I should not like my mother to notice it. Give me some very cold water."

In the midst of her storms of passion, Rosalie often listened to the voice of her conscience. Touched by this admirable fidelity of two hearts, she had just said her prayers, and told herself there was nothing left for her but to resign herself, to respect the happiness of two beings worthy of each other, resigned to their fate, awaiting everything from God, without giving way to criminal wishes or actions. She felt herself better, she experienced an internal satisfaction, after having taken this resolution, inspired by the rectitude natural to youth. She was encouraged in it by a young girl's reflection: she was sacrificing herself for *him*.

"She does not know how to love," she thought. "Ah! if it were me, I would sacrifice everything to a man who loved me like that. To be loved! When and by whom shall I be loved myself? This little Monsieur de Soulas is only in love with my fortune; if I were poor, he would pay no attention to me."

"Rosalie, my girl, what are you thinking about? You are going beyond the line," said the baroness to her daughter, who was making worked slippers for the baron.

Rosalie spent the whole of the winter of 1834–1835 in secret conflicts; but in the spring, in the month of April, the period at which she attained her nineteenth year, she sometimes said to herself that it would be a great thing to triumph over a Duchess d'Argaiolo. In silence and solitude, the prospect of this struggle rekindled her passion and her evil thoughts. She strengthened in advance her romantic temerity by forming plans on plans. Although such characters are exceptional, there exist, unfortunately, far too many Rosalies, and this history ought to be an example to them.

During this winter, Albert Savarus had silently made immense progress in Besançon. Sure of success, he awaited with impatience the dissolution of the Chamber. He had won over, amongst the *juste-milieu* party, one of the makers of Besançon, a rich contractor who wielded great influence.

The Romans everywhere took enormous pains and expended immense sums to get an excellent and unlimited water supply in all the cities of their empire. At Besançon they drank the water of Arcier, a mountain situated at a pretty good distance from Besançon. Besançon is a town situated in the hollow of a horseshoe described by the Doubs; so that to re-establish the aqueduct of the Romans, in order to drink the water the Romans drank, in a

town watered by the Doubs, is one of those absurd ideas which could only take in a province where the most exemplary gravity reigns. If this fancy got hold of the hearts of the Bisontines, it would necessitate a large expenditure, and this expenditure would be to the profit of the influential man. Albert Savaron de Savarus decided that the Doubs was good for nothing but to flow under suspension bridges, and that the only drinkable water was that of Arcier. Articles appeared in the *Revue de l'Est*, which were only the expression of the ideas of Bisontine commerce. The nobles and the citizens, the *juste milieu* and the Legitimists, the Government and the Opposition—in short, all the world was perfectly agreed in wanting to drink the water of Arcier, and possess a suspension bridge. The question of the Arcier water was the order of the day at Besançon. At Besançon, as in the two railways to Versailles, as in existing abuses, there were hidden interests which gave a powerful vitality to the idea. The reasonable people, few in number, besides, who opposed this project were treated as blockheads. Nothing was talked about but the two plans of the barrister Savaron.

After eighteen months of subterranean toil, this ambitious man had succeeded, then, in the most stationary town in France and the most obdurate

to strangers, in stirring it profoundly, in making, according to a vulgar expression, sunshine and rain there, in exercising a positive influence without having gone outside his own door. He had solved the singular problem of being a power in a place without being popular. During this winter he gained seven causes for ecclesiastics in Besançon. So that, at some moments, he breathed by anticipation the air of the Chamber. His heart swelled at the thought of his coming triumph. This immense desire, which made him bring so many interests on the scene, and invent so many stratagems, was absorbing the last energies of his soul, strained beyond measure. They applauded his disinterestedness; he accepted without observations the fees of his clients. But this disinterestedness was moral usury; he expected a reward of more consideration to him than all the gold in the world. He had bought, professedly to render a service to a merchant whose affairs were embarrassed, in the month of October, 1834, and with the funds of Léopold Hannequin, a house which rendered him eligible for election. This profitable investment did not appear to have been either sought or desired.

"You are indeed a really remarkable man," said the Abbé de Grancey, who naturally watched and understood the barrister, to Savarus. The vicar-

general had come to introduce to him a canon who required his advice. "You are," said he, "a priest who is not in his right road."

This saying struck Savarus.

On her side, Rosalie had decided, in her weak girl's strong head, to bring Monsieur de Savarus into the *salon*, and introduce him into the society of the Hôtel de Rupt. She limited her desires as yet to seeing Albert and listening to him. She had compromised, so to speak, and compromises are often only truces.

The Rouxeys, the patrimonial estate of the Wattevilles, was worth ten thousand francs a year nett, but in other hands it would have produced much more. The carelessness of the baron, whose wife would have, and had, an income of forty thousand francs, left the Rouxeys under the management of a sort of Maître Jacques, an old servant of the house of Watteville, named Modinier. Still, whenever the baron and baroness felt inclined to go into the country, they went to the Rouxeys, the situation of which is very picturesque. The house, the park—in fact, everything had been created by the famous Watteville, who, in his active old age, was passionately fond of this magnificent spot.

Between two little Alps, two peaks whose summits are bare, and which are called the Great and the

Little Rouxey, in the middle of a gorge through which the waters of these mountains descend and flow on to mingle with the delicious sources of the Doubs, Watteville had had the idea of constructing an enormous dam, leaving two weirs for the overflow of the waters. Above his dam, he obtained a lovely lake, and below it, two cascades which, uniting at some yards from their fall, fed a charming stream, with which he watered the parched, uncultivated valley formerly devastated by the torrent from the Rouxeys. This lake, this valley, and these mountains he shut in by an inclosure, and built himself a hermitage on the dam, which he made three acres in width, bringing to it all the earth that had to be dug out to make the bed of the stream and the canals for irrigation. When the Baron de Watteville made himself the lake above his dam, he was the proprietor of the two Rouxeys, but not of the higher valley which he thus inundated, through which there had always been a way, and which terminates in a horseshoe at the foot of the Dent de Vilard. But this savage old man inspired so much terror that, during his whole life, there was no complaint on the part of the inhabitants of Les Riceys, a little village situated on the other side of the Dent de Vilard. When the baron died, he had united the slopes of the two Rouxeys to the foot of the Dent de Vilard, by a strong wall, in order

not to inundate the two valleys which opened into the gorge of the Rouxeys, to the right and left of the peak of Vilard. He died, having made a conquest of the Dent de Vilard. His heirs constituted themselves the protectors of the village of Riceys, and thus maintained the usurpation. The old murderer, the old renegade, the old Abbé Watteville, had finished his career in planting trees, and making a splendid road, cut in the flank of one of the two Rouxeys, and which ran into the high-road. Attached to this park aud this habitation were grounds very ill cultivated, cottages on the two mountains, and uncultivated woods. It was wild and solitary, under the protection of nature, abandoned to the chances of vegetation, but full of sublime pastures. You can now picture to yourself the Rouxeys.

It is quite unnecessary to encumber this history by recounting the prodigious efforts, and the stratagems stamped with genius, by which Rosalie attained her end without exciting suspicion. Suffice it to say that, in obedience to her mother, she left Besançon in the month of May, 1835, in an old carriage drawn by two big hired horses, and went with her father to the Rouxeys.

Love explains everything to young girls. When, on rising the morning after her arrival at the Rouxeys, Mademoiselle de Watteville looked from the

window of her room on to the fair sheet of water, from which arose vapours exhaled like fumes, and which hovered amongst the firs and larches, crawling along the two peaks to gain their summits, she gave vent to a cry of admiration.

They fell in love whilst they were amongst the lakes; *she* is on a lake! Decidedly, a lake is full of love.

A lake fed by the snows shows the tints of an opal and the transparency of an enormous diamond; but when it is shut in, like that of the Rouxeys, between two blocks of granite clothed with firs, when there reigns over it the silence of a savannah or a steppe, it extorts from every one the cry just uttered by Rosalie.

"We owe this," said her father, "to the famous Watteville."

"Upon my honour," said the young girl, "he wanted to atone for his crimes. Let us get into the boat and go to the end," said she; "we shall get an appetite for breakfast."

The baron sent for two young gardeners who knew how to row, and took with him his first minister Modinier. The lake was six acres and sometimes ten or twelve in width, and four hundred acres in length.

Rosalie soon got to the further end, which was

bounded by the Dent de Vilard, the Jungfrau of this little Switzerland.

"Here we are, *monsieur le baron,*" said Modinier, making a sign to the two gardeners to make the boat fast; "will you come and see?"

"See what?" asked Rosalie.

"Oh, nothing," said the baron. "But you are a sensible girl; we have our secrets together, and I may tell you what is worrying my mind. Since 1830, difficulties have arisen between the commune of Riceys and me, precisely on account of the Dent de Vilard, and I want to settle them without your mother's knowledge; for she is obstinate, and is capable of getting into a passion, particularly if she knows that the Mayor of Riceys, a Republican, got up the dispute to gratify his people."

Rosalie had courage enough to disguise her joy, in order to have all the more influence on her father. "What dispute?" said she.

"Mademoiselle," said Modinier, "the people of the Riceys have for a long time had a right of pasture and wood-cutting on their side of the Dent de Vilard. Now, Monsieur Chantonnil, their mayor ever since 1830, asserts that the whole of the Dent belongs to his commune, and maintains that a hundred and odd years ago there was a right of way over our lands. You comprehend that in that case we

should no longer be in our own house. And then this savage would say next, what the old inhabitants of the Riceys say, that the site of the lake had been appropriated by the Abbé de Watteville. Why, it would be the ruin of the Rouxeys."

"Alas! my child, between ourselves, it is true," said Monsieur de Watteville, frankly. "This estate is a usurpation consecrated by time; therefore, to avoid all further disputes, I intended to propose to settle amicably my boundaries on this side of the Dent de Vilard, and then I would build a wall."

"If you give way before the Republic, it will devour you. It was for you to threaten the Riceys."

"That is just what I was saying to monsieur yesterday evening," replied Modinier. "But, to support this opinion, I proposed to him to come and see whether there were not, either on this side of the Dent or the other, at any part of it, traces of an enclosure."

For a hundred years both sides had been making the most of the Dent de Vilard, the species of party wall between the commune of the Riceys and the Rouxeys, which did not produce a great deal, without coming to extremities. The object in litigation being covered with snow six months out of the twelve, was of a nature to keep the question cool. So it required all the ardour inspired by the Revolution of

1830 in the defenders of the people to reanimate this affair, through which Monsieur Chantonnil, mayor of the Riceys, hoped to dramatize his existence on the quiet frontier of Switzerland, and immortalize his administration. Chantonnil, as his name indicates, was of Neuchâtel origin.

"My dear father," said Rosalie, on getting into the boat again, "I agree with Modinier. If you want to obtain the joint property of the Dent de Vilard, it is necessary to act with vigour, and obtain a judgment which will make you safe against the proceedings of this Chantonnil. Why should you be afraid? Get the famous Savaron for your counsel; secure him at once, so that Chantonnil may not confide to him the interests of his commune. The man who won the cause of the chapter against the town will certainly be able to win that of the Wattevilles against the Riceys! Besides," said she, "the Rouxeys will be mine some day (as far off as possible, I hope). Well, do not leave me any lawsuits. I like this place, and I shall often inhabit it. I shall enlarge it as much as I can. On these banks," said she, pointing to the bases of the two Rouxeys, "I will have clumps of trees planted; I will make charming English gardens of them. Let us go to Besançon, and not come back without the Abbé de Grancey, Monsieur Savaron, and my mother, if she

likes. Then you will be able to come to a decision; but, in your place, I should have decided already. You bear the name of a Watteville, and you are afraid of a combat! If you lose the cause, then I will never say a word to reproach you."

"Oh, if you take it in that light, I am quite willing; and I will see the advocate."

"Besides, a lawsuit is very amusing. It gives an interest to your life; you go and come and bustle about. Will you not have a thousand steps to take to get at the judges? We never saw the Abbé de Grancey for more than three weeks, he was so busy!"

"But the whole existence of the chapter was at stake," said Monsieur de Watteville. "And, besides that, the self-esteem, the conscience of the archbishop, everything that priests live for, was concerned. This Savaron does not know what he has done for the chapter; he has saved it."

"Listen to me," she whispered. "If you have Monsieur Savaron for you, you will win, will you not? Well, let me give you a piece of advice. You can only get hold of Monsieur Savaron through Monsieur de Grancey. If you think I am right, let us speak to the dear *abbé* together, without my mother being at the conference; for I know a means of inducing him to get us Monsieur Savaron."

"It will be very difficult not to mention it to your mother."

"The Abbé de Grancey will undertake that afterwards; but make up your mind to promise your vote to the barrister Savaron at the next election, and you will see."

"Go to the elections! Take the oath!" exclaimed the Baron de Watteville.

"Bah!" said she.

"And what will your mother say?"

"Perhaps she will order you to do it," answered Rosalie, who knew from the letter of Albert to Léopold the promises made by the vicar-general.

Four days after, the Abbé de Grancey popped upon Albert de Savaron very early in the morning, having given notice of his visit the day before. The old priest came to retain the great advocate for the house of Watteville—a step which reveals the tact and adroitness secretly brought into play by Rosalie.

"What can I do for you, monsieur the vicar-general?" said Savarus.

The *abbé*, who rattled through his business with admirable good humour, was coldly listened to by Albert.

"My dear *abbé*," answered he, "it is impossible for me to undertake the interests of the house of Watteville, and you will understand why. The part

I have to play here consists of keeping the strictest neutrality. I do not want to show any colours, and must remain an enigma until the eve of my election. Now, to plead for the Wattevilles would be nothing in Paris; but here—here, where everything is commented upon—everybody would set me down as the representative of your *faubourg* Saint Germain."

"What, do you believe that you will be able to remain unknown on the day of election, when the candidates attack each other? People must know then that your name is Savaron de Savarus, that you have been *maître des requêtes*, and that you are a supporter of the Restoration."

"On the day of election," said Savarus, "I shall be everything it is necessary to be. I intend to speak at the preliminary meetings."

"If Monsieur de Watteville and his party support you, you will have a hundred compact votes, and rather more reliable ones than those on which you reckon. You can always sow division amongst interests, but you cannot split up convictions."

"Oh, the deuce!" resumed Savarus. "I love you, and would do a great deal for you, father. Perhaps we may come to terms with the devil. Whatever may be the nature of Monsieur de Watteville's business, we may, by employing Girardet and giving him instructions, delay proceedings until after the

elections. I will only undertake to plead on the day after my election."

"Do one thing," said the *abbé*. "Come to the Hôtel de Rupt. There is a young girl of nineteen there, who will one day have an income of a hundred thousand francs, and you will appear to be paying your addresses to her."

"Ah! the young girl I see so often in the kiosk."

"Yes, Mademoiselle Rosalie," resumed the Abbé de Grancey. "You are ambitious. If you please her, you will be everything an ambitious man desires to be—who knows? perhaps a minister. A man can always be a minister when he combines a fortune of a hundred thousand francs a year with your astounding abilities."

"*Monsieur l'abbé*," said Albert, warmly, "if Mademoiselle de Watteville had three times as large a fortune and adored me, it would be impossible for me to marry her."

"Are you married, then?" asked the Abbé de Grancey.

"Not in church, nor at the *mairie*," said Savarus, "but morally."

"That is worse, when one is as strongly attached as you seem to be," replied the *abbé*. "What is not done can be undone. Do not rest your fortune and

your plans on the will of a woman, any more than a wise man waits for a dead man's shoes to start on a journey."

"Let us leave Mademoiselle de Watteville alone," said Albert, gravely, "and settle our arrangements. For your sake, whom I love and respect, I will plead, but after the elections, for Monsieur de Watteville. Until then your business will be managed by Girardet, according to my instructions. That is all I can do for you."

"But there are questions which can only be decided after an inspection of the locality," said the vicar-general.

"Girardet will go," replied Savarus. "I cannot allow myself, in the midst of a town I know so well, to take a step of a nature to compromise the immense interests concealed behind my election."

The Abbé de Grancey, on leaving Savarus, gave him a sly look, by which he seemed to laugh at the compact policy of the young athlete, whilst admiring his resolution.

"Ah! I have dragged my father into a lawsuit! Ah! I have done all this to get you here!" said Rosalie to herself, from the height of the kiosk, looking at the barrister in his cabinet the day after the conference between Albert and the Abbé de Grancey, the result of which had been communicated

to her by her father. "I have committed mortal sins, and you will not enter the *salon* of the Hôtel de Rupt, and I shall not hear your splendid voice! You put conditions on your assistance when the Wattevilles and the Rupts ask for it! Well, God knows I would have been satisfied with these small pleasures—to see you, to hear you, to go to the Rouxeys with you, and have them consecrated for me by your presence. I did not want any more. But now I will be your wife! Yes, yes; look at *her* portraits, examine *her salons, her* room, the four fronts of *her* villa, the views in *her* gardens! You are waiting for her statue! I will turn her to marble herself for you. Besides, this woman cannot love. Art, science, literature, singing, and music have taken up half her senses and her intellect. Besides, she is old; she is more than thirty, and my Albert would be unhappy!"

"What makes you stay there, Rosalie?" said her mother, interrupting the reflections of her daughter. "Monsieur de Soulas is in the *salon,* and remarked your attitude, which certainly betrayed more thoughts than you ought to have at your age."

"Is Monsieur de Soulas an enemy of thought?" asked she.

"You were thinking, then?" said Madame de Watteville.

"Why, yes, mamma."

"Why, no, you were not thinking. You were looking at the windows of this barrister with an interest which is neither proper nor decent, and which Monsieur de Soulas, least of all persons, ought to remark."

"But why?" said Rosalie.

"Well," said the baroness, "it is time that you knew our intentions. Amédée admires you, and you will not be badly off as Countess de Soulas."

Pale as a lily, Rosalie made no answer to her mother, the violence of her disappointed sentiments rendered her so thoroughly stupid. But in the presence of this man, whom she hated so deeply since an instant ago, she put on the indefinable smile that dancers put on for the public. In short, she was able to laugh, she had strength to conceal her rage, which calmed itself down, for she resolved to employ this great silly young fellow for her own purposes.

"Monsieur Amédée," she said to him, during a moment when the baroness was in advance of them in the garden, affecting to leave the young people alone, "you did not know, then, that Monsieur Albert Savaron de Savarus is a Legitimist?"

"A Legitimist?"

"Before 1830, he was *maître des requêtes* to the Council of State, attached to the presidency of the

Council of Ministers, and in favour with the Dauphin and Dauphiness. It would have been good of you not to say anything against him, but it would be still better to go to the elections this year, to support him and prevent that poor Monsieur de Chavoncourt from representing the town of Besançon."

"But why do you take such a sudden interest in this Savaron?"

"Monsieur Albert de Savarus, the natural son of the Count de Savarus (pray keep this piece of indiscretion secret), if he is elected deputy, will be our counsel in the affair of the Rouxeys. The Rouxeys, my father tells me, will be my property. I should like to live there; it is charming! I should be in despair at seeing this magnificent creation of the great Watteville destroyed."

"*Diantre!*" said Amédée to himself, on leaving the Hôtel de Rupt, "this heiress is not quite such a fool as her mother thinks her."

Monsieur de Chavoncourt is a Royalist who belongs to the famous 221. Accordingly, from the very day of the Revolution of July, he preached the salutary doctrine of taking the oath and combating the actual order of things, after the example of the Tories against the Whigs in England. This doctrine was not adopted by the Legitimists, who, in their defeat, had the good sense to differ in opinion and rely on

the *vis inertiæ* and on Providence. Exposed to the suspicion of his party, Monsieur de Chavoncourt appeared to the members of the *juste milieu* the most satisfactory choice to make; they preferred the triumph of his moderate opinions to the ovation of a Republican who united the votes of the enthusiasts and the patriots. Monsieur de Chavoncourt, a man very much esteemed in Besançon, represented an old parliamentary family; his fortune, of about fifteen thousand francs a year, did not offend anybody, none the less because he had a son and three daughters. Fifteen thousand francs a year are nothing with such encumbrances. Now when, under these circumstances, the father of a family remains incorruptible, it is difficult for the electors not to esteem him. Electors manifest a passionate admiration for the *beau ideal* of parliamentary virtue, quite as much as the pit for the representation of generous sentiments it very seldom practises. Madame de Chavoncourt, then forty years of age, was one of the fine women of Besançon. During the sessions, she lived poorly on one of her estates, in order to make up by her economies for the expenses of Monsieur de Chavoncourt at Paris. In the winter, she entertained her friends honourably one day in the week, the Tuesday; but with a thorough knowledge of her duties as mistress of the house. Young Chavoncourt,

aged twenty-two, and another young gentleman, named Monsieur de Vauchelles, no richer than Amédée, and also his schoolfellow, were exceedingly intimate. They went together to Granville; they went out shooting together; they were so well known as inseparables that they were invited into the country together.

Equally intimate with the young Chavoncourts, Rosalie knew that these three young men had no secrets from each other. She said to herself that if Monsieur de Soulas committed an indiscretion, it would be with his two intimate friends. Now, Monsieur de Vauchelles had his plans prepared for his marriage as Amédée had for his; he wanted to marry Victoire, the eldest of the young Chavoncourts, on whom an old aunt would settle an estate of seven thousand francs a year and a hundred thousand francs in money by the marriage contract. Victoire was the god-daughter and the favourite of this aunt. Evidently, then, young Chavoncourt and Vauchelles would warn Monsieur de Chavoncourt of the peril he would be placed in by the pretensions of Albert. But this was not enough for Rosalie; she wrote, with her left hand, an anonymous letter to the prefect of the department, signed *A Friend of Louis Philippe*, in which she informed him of the secret candidature of Monsieur Albert de Savarus, explaining the dan-

gerous support a Royalist orator would lend to Berryer, and exposing the deepness of the conduct pursued by the advocate at Besançon for the last two years. The prefect was an able man, a personal enemy of the Royalist party, and devoted by conviction to the Government of July; in short, one of those men who make the Minister of the Interior in the Rue de Grenelle say, "We have got a good prefect at Besançon." This prefect read the letter, and, according to request, burnt it.

Rosalie wanted to make Albert lose his election, in order to keep him for five years more at Besançon.

The elections were at that time a party struggle, and, in order to triumph, the minister chose his ground in choosing the moment of the contest. Accordingly, the elections would not take place before the end of three months. When a man's whole life depends upon an election, the time which elapses between the decree for the convocation of the electoral colleges and the day fixed for their operations is a time during which his ordinary life is suspended. And Rosalie well understood how much latitude the preoccupations of Albert during these three months would leave her. She obtained from Mariette, whom, as she afterwards confessed, she promised to take into her service, as well as Jérôme, to deliver to her the letters sent by Albert to Italy, and the letters

for him that came from that country. And all the time she was executing these plans this astonishing girl was making slippers for her father, with the most innocent air in the world. She even redoubled her candour and innocence, knowing all the effect of her candid and innocent looks.

"My daughter grows charming," said the Baroness de Watteville.

Two months before the elections, a meeting was held at the house of Monsieur Boucher, senior, composed of the contractor (who was looking forward to the works of the bridge and the Arcier water supply), of the father-in-law of Monsieur Boucher, of Monsieur Granel (the influential man to whom Savarus had rendered a service, and who was to propose him as a candidate), of the attorney Girardet, of the printer of the *Revue de l'Est*, and of the president of the Tribunal of Commerce. In short, this meeting comprised twenty-seven of those personages called in the provinces "big wigs." Each of them represented an average of six votes; but, on reckoning them, they were taken as ten, for people always begin by exaggerating to themselves their own influence. Amongst these twenty-seven persons, one belonged to the prefect, some false friend who wanted a favour from the minister for his friends or himself. At this first meeting it was agreed to choose the

barrister Savaron for candidate, with an enthusiasm nobody could have hoped for in Besançon.

Whilst waiting at home for Alfred Boucher to come and fetch him, Albert chatted with the Abbé de Grancey, who was interested in this immense ambition. Albert had recognized the enormous political capacity of the priest, and the priest, moved by the prayers of the young man, had consented to act as his guide and counsel in this supreme struggle. The chapter did not like Monsieur de Chavoncourt; for the brother-in-law of his wife, who was president of the tribunal, had caused the loss of the famous suit in the first stage.

"You are betrayed, my dear child," said the astute and respectable *abbé*, in that soft, calm voice habitual to aged priests.

"Betrayed!" exclaimed the lover, struck to the heart.

"And by whom I know not," replied the priest. "The prefecture is acquainted with your plans, and looks over your hand. For the moment I can give you no advice. Such affairs as this require consideration. As to this evening, at this meeting anticipate the attacks that will be made on you. Relate all your former life; you will thus diminish the effect that this discovery would produce on the Bisontines."

"Oh, I expected this!" said Savarus, in a broken voice.

"You would not profit by my advice. You had the opportunity of appearing at the Hôtel de Rupt. You don't know what you would have gained."

"What?"

"The unanimity of the Royalists: a momentary agreement to go to the elections; in short, more than a hundred votes. By adding to these what we call amongst ourselves the ecclesiastical votes, you would have been not yet elected, but sure of the election by ballot. In such a case, you parley; you progress."

On entering, Alfred Boucher, who announced the decision of the preliminary meeting with great enthusiasm, found the vicar-general and the advocate cold, calm, and grave.

"Adieu, *monsieur l'abbé*," said Albert; "we will go into your affair more thoroughly after the elections."

And the advocate took Alfred's arm, after having significantly pressed the hand of Monsieur de Grancey. The priest looked at this ambitious man, whose face wore the sublime air of a general catching the sound of the first cannon-shot of the battle. He lifted his eyes to heaven, and said to himself on leaving, "What a splendid priest he would make!"

Eloquence is not to be found at the bar. Seldom does the advocate put forth the full powers of his

soul, otherwise he would perish in a few years. Eloquence is seldom to be found in the pulpit in these days; but it is to be found in certain sittings of the Chamber of Deputies, when the ambitious man risks all or nothing, or, stung by a thousand darts, breaks out at a given moment. And it is still to be found, assuredly, in certain privileged beings in the fatal crisis when their pretensions are about to fail or succeed, and when they are obliged to speak. And so, at this meeting, Albert Savarus, feeling the necessity of making himself faithful followers, developed all the faculties of his soul, all the resources of his mind. He entered the room well, without awkwardness or arrogance, without weakness or timidity, but with gravity, and found himself, without surprise, in the midst of upwards of thirty persons. The rumour of the meeting and its decision had already attracted some docile sheep to the fold. Before listening to Monsieur Boucher, who wanted to deliver a speech respecting the resolution of the Boucher committee, Albert demanded silence by making signs and pressing the hand of Monsieur Boucher, as if to warn him of suddenly arisen danger.

"My young friend Alfred Boucher has just announced to me the honour you have done me; but, before this decision becomes final," said the advocate, "I think it my duty to explain to you what

your candidate is, in order to leave you still free to withdraw your promises if my declarations disturb your conscience."

This exordium had the effect of causing a profound silence to reign around. Some people considered the movement very noble.

Albert explained his former life, announcing his real name and his employment under the Restoration, declaring himself a new man since his arrival at Besançon, and pledging himself for the future. This improvisation, they say, kept all the audience breathless. These men, whose interests were so opposite, were all subjugated by the admirable eloquence which sprang boiling from the heart and soul of this ambitious man. Admiration prevented all reflection. They only understood one thing, the thing that Albert wanted to get into their heads.

Was it not better for a city to be represented by one of those men destined to govern society, than by a mere voting machine? A statesman is himself a power; an ordinary, but incorruptible, deputy is only a conscience. What a glory for Provence to have discovered Mirabeau—to have returned, after 1830, the only statesman produced by the Revolution of July!

Under the pressure of this eloquence, all the auditors believed in its power to become a magnificent

political instrument in their representative. They all saw Savarus the minister in Albert Savaron. Divining the secret calculations of his hearers, the skilful candidate gave them to understand that they would acquire, themselves in the first place, the right of making use of his influence.

This profession of faith, this declaration of ambition, this account of his life and character, was, according to the only man capable of judging Savarus, and who has since become one of the notabilities of Besançon, a masterpiece of skill, of sentiment, of warmth, of interest, and of seduction. This whirlwind carried away the electors. Never did man have such a triumph. But, unfortunately, speech, a sort of weapon for close quarters, has only an immediate effect. Reflection destroys oratory when oratory has not triumphed over reflection. If they had voted then and there, assuredly the name of Albert would have leapt from the urn. For the moment, he was the conqueror. But he had to conquer like this every day for two months. Albert went away panting for breath. Applauded by the Bisontines, he had obtained the grand result of killing in advance the damaging remarks to which his antecedents might give rise. The trade of Besançon constituted the barrister Savaron de Savarus its candidate. The enthusiasm of Albert Boucher,

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"She is one of those women who are born to reign!" said the vicar, comprehending all the affection Albert showed him by this mute confidence. "But there is a host of pride on that brow; it is implacable. She would never forgive an injury! She is an archangel Michael, the angel of judgment, the inflexible angel. 'All or nothing' is the motto of those angelic characters. There is something divinely untamed in this countenance."

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"You will find to-morrow at the Hôtel de Rupt Madame de Chavoncourt and her second daughter. You will thank her for what she is about to do for you; you will tell her that your gratitude is boundless

—that you belong to her, body and soul. Are not your future interests henceforward those of her family? You are disinterested; you have so much confidence in yourself that you look upon a nomination as deputy as a sufficient marriage portion. You will have a combat with Madame de Chavoncourt; she will try to make you pledge yourself. In this evening, my son, is your whole future. But, understand, I have nothing to do with it; I am only responsible for the Legitimist votes. I have won over for you Madame de Watteville, and that means all the aristocracy of Besançon. Amédée de Soulas and Vauchelles, who will vote for you, have brought over the young people; Madame de Watteville will get you the old ones. As for my votes, they are infallible."

"Who has influenced Madame de Chavoncourt, then?" asked Savarus.

"Do not question me," replied the *abbé*. "Monsieur de Chavoncourt, who has got three daughters to marry, is incapable of augmenting his fortune. If Vauchelles marries the first without a portion, on account of the old aunt, who will finance the marriage contract, what is to be done with the two others? Sidonie is sixteen, and you have treasures in your ambition. Some one has said to Madame de Chavancourt that it would be better to marry her daughter than to send her husband to waste money at Paris.

This some one manages Madame de Chavoncourt, and Madame de Chavoncourt manages her husband."

"Enough, dear *abbé*, I understand. Once elected, I shall have some one's fortune to make, and by making it a splendid one I shall be released from my word. You have in me a son, a man who will owe you all his happiness. My God! what have I done to deserve so much real friendship?"

"You have procured the triumph of the chapter," said the vicar-general, with a smile. "Now, keep all this as secret as the tomb. We are nothing; we do nothing. If they knew that we meddled with the elections, we should be eaten up raw by the puritans of the Left, who do worse, and blamed by some of our own side, who want everything. Madame de Chavoncourt does not suspect my participation in all this. I have only confided in Madame de Watteville, on whom we may rely as on ourselves."

"I will bring you the duchess for you to give us your blessing!" exclaimed the votary of ambition.

After having shown out the old priest, Albert retired to rest in the cradle of power.

At nine o'clock in the evening of the next day, as every one may imagine, the *salons* of Madame the Baroness de Watteville were filled with the Bisontine aristocracy, specially convoked. The *exception* of taking part in the elections to please the daughter

political instrument in their representative. They all saw Savarus the minister in Albert Savaron. Divining the secret calculations of his hearers, the skilful candidate gave them to understand that they would acquire, themselves in the first place, the right of making use of his influence.

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"I am quite willing," said the baron; "and, for my part, I will give her the Rouxeys, now that the tribunal has arranged matters between us and the commune of the Riceys by fixing my boundaries at three hundred mètres from the foot of the Dent de Vilard. They are digging a dyke to receive all the water and carry it into the lake. The commune has not appealed, and the judgment is final."

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These words of wisdom alarmed Mademoiselle de

Watteville. "But what shall I do?" said she, after a pause.

"In order to make reparation for your faults, we must know the extent of them," replied the *abbé*.

"Well, then, I will write to the only man who could have any knowledge of the fate of Albert—to Monsieur Léopold Hennequin, a notary at Paris, the friend of his youth."

"Do not write any more, except to render homage to the truth," replied the vicar-general. "Confide to me the true letters and the false ones; explain everything to me in detail, as you would to the director of your conscience, leaving me to find the means of expiating your faults, and relying upon me. I will see—— But, above all, restore to this unfortunate man his innocence towards the being whom he has made his deity on this earth. For, after having lost his happiness, Albert must still be anxious for his justification."

Rosalie promised to obey the Abbé de Grancey, hoping that his proceedings might perhaps result in restoring Albert to her.

A short time after the confession of Mademoiselle de Watteville, a clerk of Monsieur Léopold Hennequin's came to Besançon, provided with a power of attorney from Albert, and went straight to Monsieur Girardet's, to request him to sell the house belonging

to Monsieur Savaron. The attorney undertook the business out of regard for the barrister. The clerk sold the furniture, and was able to pay off with the proceeds what Albert owed Girardet, who, at the time of the inexplicable departure, had advanced him five thousand francs, undertaking also to get in what was owing to him. When Girardet asked what had become of this noble and valiant athlete, in whom he had taken so much interest, the clerk answered that nobody knew but his principal, and that the notary had appeared very much affected by the contents of the last letter written by Monsieur Albert de Savarus.

On learning this news, the vicar-general wrote to Léopold. Here is the answer of the worthy notary:—

"*À Monsieur l'Abbé de Grancey, vicar-general of the diocese of Besançon.*

"Paris.

"Alas! sir, it is not in the power of any one to restore Albert to the life of the world. He has renounced it. He is a novice at the Great Chartreuse, near Grenoble. You know still better than I, who have just learnt it, that everything dies on the threshold of this cloister. Foreseeing my visit, Albert interposed the general of the Carthusians between all my efforts and himself. I know this noble heart well enough to be certain that he is the victim of an

odious plot, invisible to us. But all is over. Madame the Duchess d'Argaiolo, now Duchess de Rhetoré, seems to have carried her cruelty very far. At Belgirate, where she was no longer to be found when Albert reached there, she had left orders to lead him to believe that she was living in London. From London, Albert went to seek for his mistress at Naples; from Naples, to Rome, where she became engaged to the Duke de Rhetoré. When Albert did meet Madame d'Argaiolo, it was at Florence, at the moment of the celebration of her marriage. Our poor friend fainted away in the church, and has never been able, even when his life was in danger, to obtain an explanation from this woman, whose heart must be made of something inhuman. Albert travelled for seven months in search of a barbarous creature who took a pleasure in escaping from him. He neither knew where nor how to catch her. I saw our poor friend on his passage through Paris, and if you had seen him as I did, you would have perceived that not a word must be said on the subject of the duchess, unless you wished to bring on a crisis in which his reason would have been in danger. If he had known his crime, he might have found the means of justification; but, falsely accused of being married, what could he do? Albert is dead, quite dead, to the world. He wished for repose; let us hope that the profound

silence and prayer into which he has thrown himself may insure his happiness in another form. If you knew him, sir, you must pity him deeply, and also pity his friends.—Receive," etc.

Immediately on the receipt of this letter, the good vicar-general wrote to the general of the Carthusians, and this was the answer from Albert Savarus:—

"*Brother Albert to Monsieur l'Abbé de Grancey, Vicar-general of the diocese of Besançon.*

"From the Great Chartreuse.

"I recognize, dear and much loved vicar-general, your kind disposition and still youthful heart in everything that the reverend father the general of our order has just communicated to me. You have divined the only wish that remained in the innermost recess of my heart relative to the things of this world—to have justice done to my sentiments by her who has so ill-treated me! But, in leaving me at liberty to make use of your offer, the general wished to know whether my vocation was firm. He had the signal kindness to tell me so on seeing me decided to maintain an absolute silence in this respect. If I had given way to the temptation of rehabilitating the man of the world, the monk would have been dismissed from the monastery. Grace was certainly manifested; but, although short, the combat was

none the less sharp nor cruel. Is not that saying clearly enough that I cannot re-enter the world? And the pardon you ask of me for the author of so many evils is full and entire, without a thought of ill will. I will pray to God to pardon this young lady, as I pardon her, just as I shall pray Him to grant a happy life to Madame de Rhetoré.

"Ah! whether it be death or the self-willed hand of a young girl determined on making herself loved, or whether it be one of those blows attributed to chance, must we not always obey God? Misfortune creates in some souls a vast desert in which the Divine Voice resounds. I have discovered too late the relations between this life and that which awaits us; I am thoroughly worn out. I could not have served in the ranks of the Church militant, and I cast the remains of a life almost extinguished at the foot of the sanctuary. This is the last time I shall write. Only you, who loved me and whom I loved so much, could have made me break the law of oblivion that I imposed on myself on entering the metropolis of Saint Bruno, but you are always particularly named in the prayers of

"BROTHER ALBERT.

"November, 1836."

"Perhaps all is for the best," said the Abbé de Grancey to himself.

When he had communicated this letter to Rosalie, who kissed with a pious fervour the passage that contained her pardon, he said to her, "Well, now that he is lost to you, will you not reconcile yourself with your mother by marrying the Count de Soulas?"

"Albert must order me to do it," she said.

"You see it is impossible to consult him; the general would not allow it."

"If I were to go and see him?"

"Nobody can see the Carthusians. And, besides, no woman, except the Queen of France, can enter the Chartreuse," said the *abbé*. "So you have no excuse for not marrying young Monsieur de Soulas."

"I will not be the cause of unhappiness to my mother," replied Rosalie.

"Satan!" exclaimed the vicar-general.

Towards the end of this winter, the excellent Abbé de Grancey died. There was no longer, between Madame de Watteville and her daughter, this friend who interposed between these two characters of iron. The event foreseen by the vicar-general took place. In the month of April, 1837, Madame de Watteville married Monsieur de Soulas at Paris, to which she went by the advice of Rosalie, who behaved charmingly and kindly to her mother. Madame de Watteville thought it was affection in her daughter, who wished to see Paris solely for the purpose of

indulging in a terrible vengeance; she thought only of avenging Savarus by making a martyr of her rival.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, who had nearly attained the age of twenty-one, had been declared of age. Her mother, in order to settle accounts with her, had relinquished her rights on the Rouxeys; and the daughter had given her mother a discharge as to the succession of the Baron de Watteville. Rosalie had encouraged her mother to marry the Count de Soulas, and to benefit him.

"Let us each have our liberty," she said to her.

Madame de Soulas, although uneasy about the intentions of her daughter, was nevertheless touched by the nobility of her proceedings. She made her a present of six thousand francs a year in the funds, to satisfy her conscience. As Madame the Countess de Soulas had an income of forty-eight thousand francs from landed property, and no power to alienate it so as to diminish the portion of Rosalie, Mademoiselle de Watteville was still a match of eighteen hundred thousand francs. The Rouxeys might produce, with the purchases of the baron and some improvements, twenty thousand francs a year, besides the advantages of the house, and the fines and reserved rights. Accordingly, Rosalie and her mother, who soon acquired the tone and fashions of Paris, were easily introduced into the best society.

The golden key, the words "Eighteen hundred thousand francs," embroidered on the corsage of Mademoiselle de Watteville, were of much more service to the Countess de Soulas than her pretensions *à la De Rupt,* her misplaced pride, and even her rather fine-drawn family connections.

About the month of February, 1838, Rosalie, to whom a great many young men paid assiduous court, realized the project which had brought her to Paris. She wished to meet the Duchess de Rhetoré; to see this marvellous woman, and to plunge her into eternal remorse. Accordingly, Rosalie displayed a dazzling elegance and coquetry, in order to place herself on a footing of equality with the duchess. The first meeting took place at the ball given annually, ever since 1830, for the pensioners of the former civil list.

A young man, instigated by Rosalie, said to the duchess, pointing her out, "There is a very remarkable young girl, with a very strong mind. She drove into a cloister at the Great Chartreuse a man of great capacity, Albert de Savarus, whose existence was shattered by her. It is Mademoiselle de Watteville, the famous heiress of Besançon."

The duchess turned pale, and Rosalie rapidly exchanged with her one of those glances which, between woman and woman, are more mortal than

the pistol-shots of a duel. Francesca Soderini, who suspected the innocence of Albert, immediately left the ball-room, hastily quitting her interlocutor, who was incapable of guessing the terrible wound he had just given the beautiful Duchess de Rhetoré.

"If you wish to know any more about Albert, come to the ball at the Opera on Tuesday next, with a marigold in your hand."

This anonymous letter, sent by Rosalie to the duchess, brought the unhappy Italian to the ball, when Mademoiselle de Watteville placed in her hands all Albert's letters—the one written by the vicar-general to Léopold Hennequin, as well as the answer of the notary, and even that in which she had confessed everything to Monsieur de Grancey.

"I will not be the only one to suffer; for we have been quite as cruel, one as the other," she said to her rival.

After having enjoyed the stupefaction painted on the lovely face of the duchess, Rosalie made her escape, appeared no more in society, and returned with her mother to Besançon.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, who lives alone on her estate of the Rouxeys, riding on horseback, hunting, refusing her two or three offers a year, coming four or five times every winter to Besançon, occupied

in improving her estate, passed for an extremely eccentric person. She is one of the celebrities of the east.

Madame de Soulas has two children, a boy and a girl. She has got younger; but young Monsieur de Soulas has got considerably older.

"My fortune costs me dear," said he to young Chavoncourt. "To know a devotee thoroughly, unfortunately, you must marry her."

Mademoiselle de Watteville behaves like a truly extraordinary girl. They say of her, "She has her crotchets." She goes every year to look at the walls of the Great Chartreuse. Perhaps she intends to imitate her grand-uncle, by scaling the walls of this convent to get at her husband, as Watteville got over the walls of his monastery to recover his liberty.

In 1841 she left Besançon with the intention, it was said, of being married: but no one ever knew the true cause of this voyage, from which she returned in a state which forbade her ever to reappear in the world.

By one of those hazards to which the old Abbé de Grancey had alluded, she happened to be on the Loire, on board the steamer whose boiler blew up. Mademoiselle de Watteville was so severely injured that she lost her right arm and her left leg; her face bears frightful scars, which deprive her of her beauty;

her health, subjected to such horrible trials, leaves her very few days without suffering. In short, at the present day she never quits the hermitage of the Rouxeys, where she leads a life entirely devoted to works of religion.

THE END.

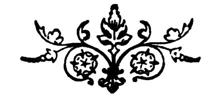
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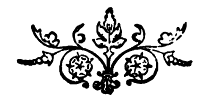
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